Instructions

For Particular

STATES.

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Instructions FOR Particular STATES.

CHAP. I.

Instructions for Timorous or Fearful Christians, subject to frequent Dejections of Spirit.

BY Timorous or Fearful Christians, I understand not those, who living in the Practice of some known Vice, and upon Checks of Conscience, are seiz'd sometimes with a just Apprehension of God's Anger, and the Eternal Consequences of their Sinful State: But such others, who being gene-

rally Solicitous to avoid the common Vices of the World, and being subject only to ordinary Infirmities, to common Weaknesses, to Surprizes, and Oversights, and not finding the Success they desire, in their frequent Attempts of overcoming these, are often perplex'd in Mind, very often discourag'd, and many times so overwhelm'd in Spirit, as to be inclin'd to give all over for lost.

These stand in need of a Skilful Hand, to support them under their Disturbance, and prevent their falling a Prey to the Devil's Malice, who is busie, in improving their Disquiets, that by their Interior Confusion he may make them unfit for their best Duties, rob them of all Comfort, weaken their Faith and Hope, and perswade them to desist from Praying, and any farther Endeavors of Amendment, since all they have hitherto done is to no Purpose. This is his Design generally against those Souls, whose solid Principles make him despair of ever drawing them into Vice; and therefore he abuses their Pious Inclinations, by perplexing their Thoughts with Unprofitable Fears, so to hinder them at least from making any Advance, and hoping for farther Success, since where-ever Anxiety seizes, he looks for a Prey.

For

For disappointing this Malice, and preventing all Miscarriage, these Christians ought to remember, This Life is not a State of Perfection, but of Weakness, and of Trials, and that as long as they are in it, they must not expect to be as Angels, but be contented to be as Men; that is, Frail, Uncertain, and Infirm: That as 'tis unreasonable to expect here the Peace, Security, and Happiness of Heaven; so 'tis likewise, to look for the Perfection of it: That to afflict themselves, because they are not priviledg'd against all Sin in this Sinful Life, is the same Indiscretion, as to grieve, because they are subject to Pains and Distempers in this State of Corruption. It being therefore their Duty to govern themselves by Reason and Prudence, it ought to be their constant Care, to Suppress or Moderate whatever they observe in themselves, contrary to these Lights, appointed for their Conduct, not only in Temporal, but more particularly in their Spiritual Concerns: It being most certain, that as far as they indulge any Thoughts or Motions, contrary to their Direction, they so far yield to some Passion or other: And so it is in this Case; for these Disquieting and Anxious Thoughts being not conformable to Reason, must there-

fore be the effect of Passion: Sometimes arising from Pride, because they cannot bear this Evidence of their Weakness: Sometimes from Impatience, because they cannot hold out in the Endeavors of overcoming that, which seems likely to give them an endless Trouble: Sometimes from Presumption, because, after so many Resolutions, they see themselves disappointed, and falling so much short of what they intended. And now, whilst all the effects of Pride, Impatience, Presumption, or any other Passion, are injurious to Reason and Prudence, they are certainly so many Weaknesses, and ought not to be indulg'd by those, who pretend to grieve because they are Weak; for this is not to cure or remove, but to encrease the Matter of their Complaints.

Q. *Would you not therefore have these grieve at their Imperfections, and such Sinful Weaknesses, which they know to be displeasing to God, and that which principally hinders them from advancing in Virtue, and approaching towards God?*

A. I would have them daily lament all such Weaknesses, not with a Passionate, but a Just and Rational Grief. You see our present Discourse is not against any degrees of Repentance, which is a Sorrow for Sin, but against that Indiscreet and

Unreasonable

Unreasonable Grief, which inclines Christians to Dejection of Mind, discourages them from the persecution of all that is Good, is the addition of new Weaknesses, and instead of drawing them nearer to God, puts them in hazard of departing yet farther from him. I make then no exceptions against that Grief, which is the effect of true Repentance; but I would not have Pride, Presumption and Impatience, pretend to grieve for Sin; for as these are Evil Roots, so their Fruit is certainly Evil, however it may have the Resemblance of Good.

Q. Can Pride then seem to grieve for Sin?

A. I have already hinted it to you above; but because it may be serviceable, I will give you some farther Light: Consider but a Person, that has the general Reputation of being Pious, Moderate, and having a great Command of all his Passions; if such an one, being provok'd in Company that are Admirers of him, becomes exasperated, and expresses his Resentments in such a manner, as to betray a great Weakness of Mind: The Consideration of having been thus overseen, may afterwards, upon reflection, give him a great trouble; so that the thought of it never comes into his Mind, but 'tis fol-

low'd with Vexation and Disquiet: Now this Grief may have the Locks of Repentance, as seemingly lamenting the being surpriz'd in Sin, and the Ill-Example given by it: And yet, if being examin'd by the Searcher of Hearts, it shall be found, that the true Occasion of his Trouble, is, because he sees himself not so steddy as he imagin'd, that he shall lose much of that Esteem his Friends had of him, and be reputed like the rest of the World; and not bearing the Thoughts of this Abjection, he is therefore vex'd and uneasie as often as they occur; all this Grief will be rejected as Pharisaical, and the effect of Pride, Impatience, and Self-love, and be so far from atoning for the former Guilt, that 'tis very likely, the Guilt of this Ambitious Grief, will be found greater than the Sin, which it pretends to lament.

I am thus particular in this Point, that those, who are subject to Dejection, may not indulge all manner of Grief, upon pretext of it being for their Sins; but examine it with a jealous Eye, and see, whether it be not the effect of Impatience, or of an uneasie Mind, rather than of true Repentance; and hence may learn, how far they are bound to Encourage or to make Opposition against it: For if it appears to be the effect of Vanity, Presumption,

ſumption, or other like Paſſion, they muſt judge it unreaſonable Diſturbance, and make the ſame Reſiſtance againſt it, as againſt other Paſſions, to which they are ſubject; and never think this a ſufficient Diſpoſition for going to their Director, and making an acknowledgment of that Fault for which they thus grieve, but rather ſtrive to compoſe themſelves, and excite ſome better Grief, ſuch as is the effect of Humility and a Solid Repentance

Q. *How ſhall they diſtinguiſh the Grief of Paſſion from that of Repentance?*

A. Not from what they feel; for that of Paſſion may be more Senſible, than the other; but rather from the effects of it. Let them obſerve, whether, upon the Grief, that ſeizes them, they are apt to be Diſcompos'd, Fretful, and out of Humor, ſo as to be uneaſie in Converſation, and Peeviſh in their Commands or Anſwers: Let them ſee, whether they are leſs Diligent in Prayer, leſs Watchful in their Ways; whether they are weak in Faith and Hope, inclin'd to think all their Endeavors fruitleſs, and ready to deſpond: If it be thus with them, they have reaſon to ſuſpect their Grief; for as in all theſe Symptoms there appears Paſſion; ſo they have reaſon to fear that Grief, which is

at the root of all this, to be not Reasonable and Christian, but only Passionate. But if upon the sense of having offended God, they are more Humble and Patient, more Fervent in Prayer, more Punctual in all Exercises of Piety, more Cautious in their Ways, more Importune with God for new Additions of Grace, entirely depending and confiding in his Goodness, Cheerful and Courageous in undertaking what is propos'd for their Help; then they may justly believe their Trouble to be well grounded, and to be the effect of a sincere Repentance: For in as much as it draws the Christian nearer to God, it must necessarily be good; upon which Consideration the other must be condemn'd; because however it looks like Grief for Sin, yet there is not one step or motion of it, but what removes the Soul farther from God, and gives it a Dislike of whatever Exercises are appointed for approaching to him.

Q. What therefore is a Christian to do, to prevent his falling into this Unprofitable Trouble?

A. He must be mindful, as above hinted, What he is; that is, nothing but Misery and Weakness; and What this Life is; that is, a Life of Imperfection and Trial: He must remember, that in all his strongest

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Purposes of Amendment, there is nothing in himself, or in all he can do, wherein he can confide; but that his whole Help is in the Free Gifts of God's Grace; that God may justly deny him that of which he must own himself Unworthy. If these Truths, by Daily Reflection, are well fix'd in his Mind, they will help to take off all Surprize at usual Failings: For, Where is the wonder, that what is Weak is subject to Weaknesses; that those, who walk on Uneven or Slippery Ways, sometimes stumble or fall; or that those Helps are denied them, which they have no right to, nay, do not deserve? Hence he may settle this Principle, that, To be subject to Infirmities, Surprizes, Oversights, and Common Failings, are the Inseparable Conditions of this Mortal State; and that to be surpriz'd at them, is the same thing, as to wonder at his being Man. This Principle may help to bound his Pretensions, in not aiming too high, or proposing more than is agreeable to the State in which he is, and with a Presumptuous Confidence hoping to accomplish, what he has thus indiscreetly propos'd; for it being a Disappointment in what he too confidently expected, that is the general Occasion of Surprize; the proposing less,

or taking off, at least, some of that too great Assurance, which rais'd his Expectation beyond what was reasonable, may contribute something to his Peace in diminishing his Wonders, which are ever attended with a Trouble, as unreasonable as they.

Q. *And can a Christian then propose too much in the Amendment of his Failings?*

A. He may be very Indiscreet in this: For if he raises up his Thoughts so far, as to say, *Non movebor in æternum*: I will be never overseen, or fail any more; if he be so settled in this Thought, as to expect what he proposes, and from the present Sentiments, which then move his Heart, he has that Confidence, as to believe, he shall never more be surpriz'd with usual Weaknesses; all this is Inconsiderate, as not remembering the Infirmities of his State, nor the Weakness of Nature, nor the Uncertainty of his Resolutions, and very likely he presumes too much of his own Strength, and the Temper of Mind, in which he then is.

Q. *How far then should he propose to himself?*

A. As far as a Person, that, in taking a necessary Journey, is oblig'd to walk a great part of it upon Ice, and has already had many Slips. For as such an one

one may be reasonably concern'd at the Difficulties of his Way, and wish he could find a better, and earnestly desire to be well over it: So may a Christian, upon considering his past Failings, be truly concern'd at the Dangers of his way, that is yet to come; he may wish he could find a better, and that he was better able to go thro' it; he may earnestly desire that he were well over it: But then as the Person in the Circumstances now mention'd, notwithstanding the many Slips he has already had, must neither, upon the next that happens, lye down discourag'd, and say, I shall never get over; nor yet stand up with such Confidence as to say; Well, now I am resolv'd so to go on, as to fall no more: But must take a middle Way betwixt this Despair and Presumption, and say thus with himself: Well, I have had many Falls, and considering the Dangers of the Way, and my want of Skill and Strength, I fear I may have many more; but however, since the Way is so Bad, and I so Weak, I will take the best Care I can, I will observe all my Steps, and if I slip again, I will again get up, and hold on with Care; and tho' I may yet have many Falls, yet these will oblige me to be more Cautious, and may teach me to be more Skilful, and so

I hope to get thro' at laſt. Juſt ſo is the Chriſtian to do: The many Failings already paſt muſt not ſo diſcourage him, as, upon the next that happens, to lye down in Deſpair, and conclude all his Care to be to no purpoſe: Neither muſt he come to that Confidence, as to reſolve, and be aſſur'd of never Falling any more; theſe are like Two Extremes to be avoided, he muſt neither fear ſo much, as to be diſcourag'd, nor hope ſo much, as to preſume: But he is to take the Travellers Mean; his paſt Failings muſt convince him both of the Difficulties of his Way, and of his own Weakneſs, and make him apprehenſive of falling again; thus he is to go on with Fear, this Fear is to make him Careful, and to be attended with ſuch a Reſolution, that if his Failings ſhould be repeated, his Care ſhall be ſtill continued; that his good Endeavors and Watchfulneſs, ſhall never ceaſe but with Life, and that whatever his Failings may be, he will ſtill ariſe, and do his beſt to go on. Hence you ſee, the fartheſt a Chriſtian can go in his Reſolutions, is to be very circumſpect, and to endeavor to amend, and to hope, that God will give him his Aſſiſting Grace to ſupport him in his Way: But to ſay and believe, that he ſhall never more Fail; he cannot do this, without for-

forgetting, Where he is, and What he is, and that all his Assurance, which is from himself, is leaning on a Broken Reed.

Q. *This being now settled, that a Christian, in these Circumstances, ought to be watchful against all Dejection, and against all Confidence in himself, which leads at length to Dejection; are there any other Directions, that may be helpful for the better securing him against this Evil?*

A. The Principal are yet to come; and these are, that he consider the Reasons, why Almighty God permits him to be subject to variety of Imperfections, and then endeavor to make that use of them, as, according to the best of our Light, seems most conform to the Designs of Providence. Here then he may reflect, that God may have Designs of Mercy in the permission of his Imperfections: First, To convince him of the Inconstancy of this Life, and thus giving him a Dislike of it, raise his Mind to the Desires of a Better. 2dly, To convince him of his own Misery and Weakness. 3dly, From this Conviction, to keep him Humble, and in a total Distrust of himself. 4thly, To make him Depend wholly on God. 5thly, To oblige him to seek Help from God,

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and be Diligent in all those Exercises, which are appointed, as the Means for obtaining his Grace. 6thly, To make him very Circumspect in all his Ways, and be fearful of all those, which may be dangerous to his Weak Nature, or tempt God, to deny him those Helps, without which he now knows he cannot subsist. 7thly, To exercise his Patience.

Having duly considered these Particulars, then as often as the Thoughts of his Endless Imperfections, pressing upon him, incline him to Dejection, he ought to turn them to a better use, and endeavor to make those Advantages of them, as seem intended by Providence, according to the Heads now mention'd.

First, By moderately bewailing the Miseries of this Life, which are so frequent a disturbance to him, and interrupt that Union, which he desires to have with God: Then again, by envying that better State of the Blessed, breaking forth into sweet Complaints, *Ut quid posuisti me contrarium tibi? Why hast thou, O God, thus set me at a distance from thee? Why am I thus unhappy, as to make War against thee? When shall I be deliver'd from this Body of Sin? When shall I be Dissolv'd, and be with Christ?* Thus may he sigh forth his Complaints, and let the sense of his present

Imperfections

Imperfections excite in him Desires of that Unchangeable State, where God is Serv'd and Ador'd without the disturbance of Corruption. And if his Weaknesses work this Happy Effect in his Soul, as to be displeas'd with Earth, and all its Distractions, and to groan with S. *Paul*, for a Change; but this ever with submission, in patiently waiting the pleasure of God, he needs not doubt, but this will ballance all the Injuries his Imperfections do him, and make them co-operate to Good.

Secondly, By Humbling himself at the experience of his frequent Imperfections, and the Disappointment of his best Resolutions, absolutely thus concluding with himself: Now I see I am nothing; there is no Confidence to be placed in all I can propose or do. I may intend and resolve, and of my self I am not sufficient to do this; but even when this is done, it will be all as Barren Seed, if God gives not his Blessing and Encrease. What therefore can I do, but prostrate my self before the Throne of God, and there acknowledge all my Weakness before him? And having appeal'd to his Infinite Goodness, there wait with hopes, that he will, in due time, either give me Grace to overcome, or have

Compassion

Compaſſion at leaſt on this Poor piece of Clay, and forgive all my Offences? He ſees all the Deſires of my Heart, and that I ſuffer Violence from the weight of my Corruption; he knows all the Trouble this gives me; and ſince he has promis'd to hear the Cries of thoſe that call upon him in Diſtreſs, I will here place all my Hopes, and with Patience expect his Deliverance; I am Poor and Needy, O God help me.

If the Chriſtian, from the ſight of his Imperfections, can come thus to a ſettled Knowledge of himſelf, and confeſs all his Strength to be Weakneſs and Nothing, and let this Thought ſink ſo deep in his Heart, as to judge himſelf Poor, Helpleſs and Contemptible, and to have a total Diſtruſt of all he can do; this again will be another effect of the Divine Goodneſs, thus to draw Good out of Evil, and will abundantly recompence whatever he may ſuffer from his own Infirmities. For ſince the great danger of Man is from his interior Pride, and his Inclination to this is ſo ſtrong, that he is ever ready to turn whatever Good he apprehends in himſelf, to his own greater Advantage and Eſteem; there is nothing, it may be, he is leſs able to bear, than in viewing himſelf, to ſee nothing, but what is Good, Commendable and Virtuous: For this will

will tempt him so much to admire and love himself, to think all to be the Fruit of his Labors, and confide in his own Strength, that he would be in danger of forgetting God, grows remiss in his Prayer, and depend but little on his Help; and thus, with all his Goodness, would soon become good for nothing. This danger God foresees, and therefore he permits in him so long a Struggle with his Infirmities, that these may be a continual Ballance to his Pride, and keep him in a due Humility, without which no other Virtue can subsist; so that, however he may complain of being unhappy under his Infirmities, yet since his great weakness makes these Necessary to him, he may consider in them the effect of a particular Mercy, and confess with *David*; *Bonum mihi, quia humiliasti me*: It is good, O Lord, that thou hast humbled me.

And tho' the Weaknesses and Failings, which he so often experiences, may be his hindrance in making that Advance, he desires, in other Virtues; yet since they so evidently contribute to the true Knowledge of himself, and perfecting him in Humility, his advancing in this one Virtue, may be a sufficient compensation for whatever he wants in others, it will be a means of possessing whatever Degree he has

has of them, with greater Security, and very much lessen the danger of abusing them, to the loss of all. Here then must be his strongest Endeavors, to make all his Infirmities serviceable to the encrease of Humility: If he cannot advance in Recollection and Undisturb'd Prayer, if he cannot wholly govern his Words, Thoughts, Passions and Affections; let his Wants here be his Motive of being more and more Humble, of having a still greater sense of his own Nothing, and of his Dependance on God; 'tis from such a prospect of repeated Weaknesses, Humility grows, gains Strength, and takes deeper Root: *Virtutibus nudus melius ipsa Humilitate vestitur*: The want of other Virtues makes way for Humility. And tho' this be not an Accomplishment agreeable to Self-love, which is pleas'd with what seems Perfect, yet this makes it more valuable to the Christian, and ought to oblige him to take more pains in obtaining, and be more joyful in possessing it, as being opposite to that Pride, which is at the Root of all Evils, and of all Virtues the less subject to the Abuses of Self-love.

Thirdly, By making such use of the sense of his own Weakness, as to rest wholly upon God for the remedy of all his

his Evils; so that while he purposes and resolves upon Amendment, and at the same time sees nothing in himself, but what gives him reason to fear a Relapse; hence the solid Grounds of his Hopes is in the Goodness of God, which he confides in, as his only Help, expects to obtain it, and yet knowing himself unworthy of such Favors, is resolv'd to wait, till it seems good to Almighty God in his Mercy to grant it: For such always is the Hopes of the Humble Heart.

Fourthly, By letting, the sense of his Wants, and of his absolute dependance on God, make him Diligent and Earnest in his Prayers, and Exact in the Performance of all those Exercises and Duties, which God has ordain'd, as the Means for obtaining that Grace by which he must expect to overcome: So that when Sloth, Tepidity or Discouragement, tempt him to the Omission of Reading or Praying, *&c.* the Memory of his Weakness, and of his only Remedy being in God, ought to spur him on, and be the Answer to all those Arguments, which incline him to Neglect. And here he is to be careful, in avoiding that Snare, into which many, thro' Dejection, are apt to fall; that is, of not going to the Sacraments, because they see no Amendment, upon what they have hitherto

hitherto done, but have ſtill reaſon to apprehend the return of the ſame Weakneſſes, which they Confeſs. For in this there is a great Impatience, in not waiting God's Time; who, tho' he will have us always ſolicite for his Bleſſings, yet will have it left to the diſpoſition of his Holy Will, to grant them, when he ſees it expedient: There is a want of Faith and Hope, in being ſo eaſily diſcourag'd from the uſe of thoſe Remedies, God preſcribes for our Help, becauſe the effect does not anſwer the haſte of our Deſires. There may be great Indiſcretion too, in propoſing a greater exemption from Weakneſs, than is conſiſtant with our State, and expecting to be freed from ſuch Infirmities, which are the effects of Conſtitution, and rather Diſtempers than Sins: There is a perverting the Orders of God, who, either for the Puniſhment of Sin, or the Encreaſe of our Crown, has appointed us to ſtrive, labor and fight againſt all our Evils, and to ſeek help in ſuch Remedies as he has ordain'd; and this, as long as we are in this World, even to the end of our Lives; and to deſiſt from this Labor and Diligent Endeavors, upon any pretext, will never be allow'd by him, who has appointed them as the Effects both of his Juſtice

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and Mercy. However, therefore the Christian finds not the Fruit of his Endeavors answerable to what he expects, he ought not for this Reason to interrupt them; for they may have many good Effects still, tho' not sensible to him, or not those, which he proposes, but yet more to his purpose: And tho' he sees no likelihood of Amendment from what he does, yet upon this consideration, he is to distrust only himself, in whom he finds no Help, but is to hope still in God, whom he believes able to give him all necessary assistance; and in hopes of this he is ever to go on, waiting with all the Humility and Patience, as becomes him, who sues for such Blessings, of which he owns himself unworthy, and therefore is to be wanting in nothing on his part, and leave the rest to God, to do in it, as he knows best.

Fifthly, By being very Cautious in all his Ways; for since he has had the Experience of his great Weakness, this ought to raise in his Soul a discreet Fear, such as may be a restraint upon him in regard of all those Ways, which have danger in them, and may provoke the Justice of God to punish his Rashness, in refusing those helps, which he so much wants. 'Tis the want of this Caution stops the Hand of God,

whilst

whilſt he ſees many Chriſtians reſenting their preſent Infirmities, and yet, in ſome other way, expoſing themſelves to ſuch Liberties, which are the daily encreaſe of their Weakneſs, and therefore wholly indiſpos'd for receiving what they ask; and hence they oblige God to deny their Petitions, that by ſuch a Denial he may oblige them with more Exactneſs to examine their Ways, and not run into Extravagancies on one hand, while they ſeem deſirous of Reforming on the other. Upon which Conſideration, let the Chriſtian, who thinks himſelf denied in what he asks, walk over-jealous and fearful of himſelf, and not venture into difficult Ways, who ſlips ſo often, on plain Ground; let him take a review of his Prayers, and all other Duties, and ſee, that nothing be wanting on his part; if there be reaſon to ſuſpect himſelf of Negleſts, let him do his beſt, peaceably to amend them, and hold on with theſe Endeavors to the end; and if he be ſubject to other Failings, he is to conſider, how far he is Faulty in the Occaſions, and be induſtrious in removing them, as far as Circumſtances will permit; otherwiſe, his reſentments will prove as unreaſonable, as in one, who is continually blowing the Fire, and complains of its burning.

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This will oblige the Christian, if he be sincere, to be very Watchful and Reserv'd: And yet because many, under these Circumstances, are inclin'd too much to an indiscreet Reservedness; by which, under pretext of avoiding that, which gives occasion to their Failings, they run into a most pernicious Melancholy; therefore, I think, in whatever they propose of this kind, they ought to communicate it to their Director, and however it may appear Reasonable, and even Necessary to them, yet to undertake nothing in it without his Advice.

Lastly, By letting the sense of his daily Failings be the exercise of his daily Patience: For tho' it cannot be allow'd the Christian to be pleas'd with his Failings, as far as they are displeasing to God, and a hinderance to the Perfection he desires; yet as far as they are Troublesom to him, and give him a daily Uneasiness, so far they may be design'd, and be made use of, as the Trial of his Patience. Thus he may consider them, as the effect of Sin, as a Burthen, under which he goes, as a Distemper, under which he labors, as Ill Way, which hinders the Traveller in his Journey, as a Contrary Wind, which keeps the Sailer from his desir'd Port: So that, while he looks on them, as his

Misfortune, and ever strives by all ways, as in a Disease, to be deliver'd from them; yet, as they try his Patience, so to bear the trouble of them with Patience, may be as great an Advantage to his Soul, as Patience under any other Affliction. He may consider them likewise, as the Means God makes use of, to render Virtue more valuable, and convince Man of its being his Gift. For could he gain upon himself, with the speed he desires, in the Amendment of his Failings, he would be too apt to presume upon his own Endeavors, and not be so careful in securing what he gains, if, when lost, he could recover it with so much ease. 'Tis therefore an expedient of Mercy, to which our common Weakness obliges God, that so by permitting us to struggle a long time with our Infirmities, and so continue in an imperfect State, we may have the truer esteem for Virtue, be more laborious in seeking, and more watchful against whatever puts us in hazard of losing it. This Consideration ought to oblige the Christian with patience, to hold out under all the Difficulties he meets in the way to Perfection, remembering, they are necessary for him, and that Virtue, which he seeks, is worth all his Labors.

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From these Heads may the Christian see, that those very Imperfections, of which he complains, as his Misfortune, may be serviceable in obtaining that Perfection, from which they seem to remove him; and that a discreet management may make them all contribute to his greater good. 'Tis here then his strongest Endeavors ought to be employ'd, as often as the frequent return of his Failings incline him to Dejection, in resolutely standing up against all such Inclinations, and not spend his Soul in unprofitable Grief; but having with Mildness reprov'd himself for all faulty Neglects, then turn all his Thoughts, in considering, what good use he can make of them; and since he sees, they may be many ways serviceable to him, in the encrease of Humility, exercise of Patience, for Distrusting of himself, and confiding more in God; and this seems to be the design of Providence, in permitting them, he ought not to neglect this Means of advancing himself, nor lose the opportunity thus daily put into his Hands; but, with an industrious Zeal, labor so to manage them, that, notwithstanding his present Apprehensions, he may have reason at length to rejoice in his Infirmities, and bless God, who has taught him thus to make all co-operate to

his greater Good. This is what I heartily deſire; and that this may be the effect of theſe Inſtructions, I here ſet down an Abridgment of them, that whereas immoderate Solicitude and Dejection of Spirit, is ever apt to make him forget what he reads, he may by a ſhort glance, again revive it for his Direction.

1. Dejection of Mind ariſing from Common Infirmities, is a great Temptation and Snare, by which the Chriſtian is made unfit for performing his beſt Duties, and opens a way to greater Evils; it is therefore not to be indulg'd, but reſiſted, as the effect of a ſecret Pride, Preſumption or Impatience.

2. All Trouble, tho' pretended for Sin, is to be eſteem'd Dejection, which removes the Chriſtian farther from God, in leſs'ning his Hope, or diſcouraging him from Prayer, and other Spiritual Duties, and becomes his great diſturbance in performing them.

3. For the Remedy of this unreaſonable Dejection, he muſt be ever mindful of the State, in which he is, and of his own great Weakneſs, and not think of being an Angel, while he is but Man, and poor Sinful Clay.

4. He muſt not depend on his own Reſolutions, but be Fearful of himſelf after the

the strongest Purposes he can make; and let his entire Dependance be on God.

5. Notwithstanding all his Failings, he must still continue waiting with a firm Hope in God, when he will please to strengthen him by his Grace.

6. He may reprove himself for his Neglects and other Faults, not in Passion, but ever with Mildness; and never think of laying by any Duty as Fruitless, but still resolve upon arising and going on, as often as he falls, and using his best Endeavors for amendment of all Wilful and Negligent Faults.

7. He must be ever mindful of the Advantage he may make of his Failings. 1. By giving him a dislike of this Corrupt and sinful State, and with submission to the Divine Will, desiring a Better. 2dly, In the knowledge of himself and his own Weakness. 3dly, By Humbling himself more and more, and distrusting in all he can do. 4thly, By depending with greater Confidence on God. 5thly, By being more Diligent in Prayer and other Duties, which are appointed as Means for obtaining the Divine Grace. 6thly, By being more Circumspect in what he does, and Fearful of all his Ways. Lastly, By submitting with Patience to the Trouble of all his Infirmities, and to the Difficulties of their Cure.

Here are the Rules in short, which he is to follow; and when he is most inclin'd to Dejection, it will not be improper to read them every Day, that so by reviving these Truths, a lively sense of them may make him more active in his Duty, and stifle those Suggestions of Fear, Solicitude and Anxiety, by which the Devil labors to draw him out of his Way. But while I give these Directions to Fearful Christians, let not those, who are Tepid and Negligent, take the Advantage of any of them, to favor their Indifferency, or justifie their Sloth; for it is here, as with Distempers of the Body, what is a Remedy for one, may be Poyson for another: And therefore I desire these to observe the Instructions design'd for them in particular hereafter.

CHAP. II.

Instructions for Melancholy and Scrupulous Christians.

I put these together, because they are generally found together; there being seldom Melancholy without Scruples, or Scruples without some degrees of Melancholy. The

The First Instruction for these, is to take Advice with such Friends, as they can most confide in, how far their Indisposition of Mind may be occasion'd by the Indisposition of Body, and what may be proper Means for their Relief: And upon finding Benefit, to be punctual in following Prescriptions.

2dly, If it appears to be the effect of Constitution or Temper of Mind, such as is not likely to be remov'd by Physic; then to be industrious, at least, in standing against all the Inclinations to it: For tho' Melancholy be an Evil, that oppresses the Mind with a kind of Weight, and thus renders it unfit for making Resistance; yet something may be done, by those, who have a true sense of their Evil, and such a Resolution, as not to lye then still with their Hands tied by a kind of Sloth and Stupidity, when the Liberty and Life of their Soul is in evident hazard for want of Fighting. This is Advice not understood by those, who have for any time yielded to the Violence of this Usurping Passion; for these seem convinc'd, that 'tis the same Absurdity, to bid the Deaf hear, and the Lame walk with an equal step, as to give them Directions, for making resistance against that Evil,

which has taken from them all power of Resisting. This, I confess, is an unhappy State, such as I know how to compassionate, better than advise; and therefore, leaving these to the Physician's Care, I Address my Instructions to those, who are not so far gone, but are yet capable of being Directed.

To these then I say, they are oblig'd to stand up with resolution against all the approaches of this Pernicious Evil, and shew no favor to it, tho' recommended under the flattering Arguments of a necessary Reserv'dness, Forsaking the Ways of the World, Recollection of Mind, Piety or Devotion: For however these Proposals are to be encourag'd in others; yet in these they are to be look'd on, as the Treacheries of a designing Enemy, who carries them to the Temple for no other end, than to cast them down from the greater Precipice, and only perswades them to Reform, that he may by degrees make them unfit for all Duties.

This, Unwary Souls do not apprehend; but, for their good, I wish they would believe those Friends, whose Experience and Charity make them Solicitous for their Eternal Welfare. Such as these will advise them to be watchful against all the approaches of Sadness; and tho' it be

be allow'd them to lament their Sins; yet even to be jealous of this Grief too, if once it begins, like a Weight, to oppress the Mind, and as a clog, keeps it down in all its Attempts of raising it self to God. Whatever Sadness carries with it Oppression and Discouragement, is to be resisted by the Christian: At its first Enterance, he ought to consider it as Evil; and if he cannot cast it off, let it be regarded, as an interior Affliction permitted for his Trial; and, as there may be comfort in all other Afflictions, if receiv'd with Humility, and submitted to with the Spirit of Christ, that is, with Patience and Meekness, in the accomplishment of the Divine Will; so let him endeavor to sweeten this interior Trouble, by acknowledging it as the effect of God's Justice, for the Punishment of his Sins, and of his Mercy, for the improvement of Virtue; and thus considering it, as design'd for his Good, this may be a Motive to submit to it with Cheerfulness; and this Submission cannot fail of mixing it at least with some Comfort and Peace, such as will take off the clog of Anxiety, and render it not only tolerable, but Medicinal also, if not wholly remove it.

This may, and ought to be done in the beginning of this Indisposition, when

it begins firſt to ſeize; and tho' afterwards, the Practice of this Advice is more difficult; yet, if then attempted with greater reſolution, it will by degrees gain upon the Diſtemper; and the Difficulties ought not to diſcourage the Undertakers; becauſe, this being the only Chriſtian uſe, that can be made of all Afflictions, 'tis in this they are oblig'd to apply all their Endeavors; and, if they give over theſe, before they have work'd their Souls into a Goſpel-Submiſſion, they may be aſſur'd, this is the effect of Cowardize and Sloth, and they can never expect a Victory, if they lay down their Arms, while their Enemy ſtands Arm'd, and making his Aſſaults againſt them. 'Tis therefore nothing leſs than Duty, that obliges them to be thus Watchful and Induſtrious in their Defence; and they depart ſo far from the Rules and Practice of the Goſpel, as they yield to Diſcouragement and Sloth.

But if Duty alone will not prevail, let the Thoughts of that Miſchief, into which they are haſt'ning, add ſome Life to their endeavors, in ſupplying with Fear, what is wanting of Zeal: And this effect it would certainly have, could they but frame a true Idea of this deſtructive Evil, where it has taken Root, and is grown

Habitual.

Habitual. For if they would but believe, what a diſreliſh it gives the Soul to Prayer, and other Exerciſes of Devotion; how it galls the Mind, making it Paſſionate and Fretful; inclines it to Suſpicions, Jealouſies, and Malice; opens it to the moſt Horrid Temptations of Deſpair, Prophaneneſs, Infidelity and Blaſphemy; puſhes it on to ſeek Satisfaction in things Senſual, becauſe it can find no Comfort in God; racks it with Endleſs Fears; blinds it with Miſts and Darkneſs, confounds it with Horror, conſumes it with Solicitude, and becomes its own Executioner, by being Ingenious in nothing elſe, but unnaturally contriving every thing, ſo as to make it deſtructive to its own Peace and Life. If they would believe, I ſay, theſe and Infinite other Miſchiefs of this Diſtemper, the Apprehenſion of falling into it, would oblige them to be ſo watchful in all its approaches, as to think all their labor well employ'd, which might be any ways ſerviceable in ſecuring them againſt it. This Fear would make them jealous of all degrees of Sadneſs; it would put them upon ſtanding up with Vigor, when they are more inclin'd to lye ſtill; it would allow of no unprofitable Amuſements; it would perſwade them to ſeek Comfort in God, and

and in the Exercise of Prayer; but not permit them, under pretext of this, to give way to too much Solitude, and less to the working Phancies of a Chimerical Entertainment: It would approve of Reading and Praying, as long as they can keep their Thoughts with any tolerable Application to what they are doing; but upon observing these to run with violence into those vain Imaginations, which feed their Distemper, and are so much Poyson to their Mind, then it would direct them to quit those Exercises for a time, and rather seek, by Work or Conversation, to stop the Current of those Thoughts, and recover something of a Calm.

Q. *Persons subject to this Disorder, are generally averse to Work and Company; because these are Interruptions of their Retirement; and Conversation especially the general occasion of many Sins, 'tis for their inward Peace they are Solicitous to decline it.*

A. I wonder not at their being averse to Work, because I am sensible, how this Distemper benumbs the Spirits, takes off all Life from the Soul, renders it Slothful and Unactive, and inclines it rather to sit still and sleep than work: But this is the effect of their Distemper which'

which will encreaſe by their yielding to this Lazy way, however it paſſes with them under the better Name of Retirement; and therefore, if they deſire to maſter their Diſeaſe, they cannot do better, than contrive for themſelves ſome daily Employment, and force their Idle Humor to be Conſtant in it, ſo to cut off the Occaſions of unprofitable Grief, and all their fraitleſs Thinking; and if they begin with forſaking their Beds at more ſeaſonable Hours, this Contradiction to Temper will be a good beginning of the Day, and by its Self-denial, may obtain a bleſſing upon their Endeavors.

I urge the ſame, as to Converſation; for tho' they are not to ſeek Comfort in the Sinful Satisfactions of Senſuallity or Intemperance; yet it muſt be adviſable to divert their Diſtemper by the uſual Converſation of Family or Friends: For however it may appear to them unprofitable, or ſo much time loſt; yet in as much as it may prove of Great Help to them, and is undertaken upon this Motive, it may be more to their purpoſe, than their Retirement; and the beſt Exerciſes of it, which being abus'd by them, in compliance with their diſtemper'd Inclination, are for the greater part better omitted than perform'd. Nay, tho' we ſuppoſe

the

the Converſation be not exempt from the Common Failings of Ordinary Diſcourſe, yet it is not to be declin'd upon this account; becauſe this is much the leſſer Miſchief, than what they do to themſelves in avoiding it; and therefore is to be prefer'd in their caſe, and to be conſider'd as a Medicine, which being order'd for the removal of ſome dangerous Diſeaſe, is not to be omitted upon the apprehenſion of being likely to cauſe ſome inconſiderable diſorder another way. Whatever therefore be the Averſion of Nature againſt ſuch Converſation, it muſt not be conſider'd, but overcome; tho' it appears, upon a ſhort Trial, to be to no purpoſe; nay, tho' it fills the Mind with greater diſturbance, and ſeems to encreaſe the Diſtemper, yet it is ſtill to be continued; for 'tis not reaſonable to expect Habitual Diſorders to be cur'd with a Doſe or two, which are not to be remov'd but by a Courſe of Phyſic: And what if upon the entering into it, the Diſtemper ſeems to grow worſe? For how ſhould it be expected, the Mind can become more eaſie, when 'tis Contradicted in its Fondeſt Inclinations? No, there is no Hopes of Amendment upon the firſt Trial of the Remedy; for it then only diſturbs the Humors, and muſt neceſſarily be follow'd with an interior

terior struggle. 'Tis from the continuance of the Remedy the effect must proceed; and there is no question, but those, who will be so sincerely true to their own Interest, as not to be discourag'd with the delay'd Success, but bearing the difficulties of the first Trials, hold on with resolution, in hopes of finding benefit, will at length have their uneasie Remedies follow'd with some relief of Mind, and their refreshments encrease, till they become truly Masters of themselves. For this end, since they have sufficient reason to believe themselves under a great Disorder of Mind, they have the same reason to distrust of all their own Thoughts, and Judgment; they must not think it safe to hearken to their Inclinations; they must not attend to whatever Jealousies or Suspicions are rais'd within them; they must suspect all these as Corrupted by their Distemper, and not fit to give direction of what they are to do, and therefore whatever Arguments are suggested by these, in concluding their Company to be averse to them, or in construing every thing that is said, as Reflections made upon them; all these are to be thrown by, notwithstanding their apparent Demonstration, as the Effect of their Indisposition, which naturally

rally turns every thing to the worſt, for their own diſquiet, and preventing their Cure. And hence they cannot do better, than make Choice of ſome Prudent Friend, on whoſe Advice they can depend, and taking frequent opportunities of Communicating their Thoughts to him, reſolve upon following his Direction, tho' in Contradiction, not only to their Inclination, but to their Reaſon and Judgment: For all that is within them being Diſtemper'd, their beſt Light is Darkneſs, and their Reas'ning is Deluſion; and if they can but frame this one Judgment aright, of concluding themſelves incapable of Directing themſelves, and that for their Security they muſt neceſſarily ſubmit to another's Direction, it is thus only they can come to the poſſibility of being Cur'd, and without this all other Endeavors will be to no purpoſe.

Hitherto as to Melancholy conſider'd in it ſelf; now we are to look on a General Effect of it, which is that of perplexing the Mind with Scruples, and give ſome Inſtructions to thoſe, who are thus diſturb'd, which may likewiſe be ſerviceable, tho' the Scruples be not Occaſion'd by this diſorder, but proceed from ſome other root.

And as to theſe, I muſt begin, where I now

now left off with the others, in plainly declaring to them, that as long as they are disturb'd, with this perplexing Evil, they must suspect all their own Reas'ning and Judgment, and be as fearful of depending on it, as on a Blind Guide, who has presumption enough to undertake to Conduct them a Safe way, over Bogs, Fords, and Precipices; because they are no more capable of judging aright, than such an one is of being a Safe Guide. A Principal reason of this, is, because Humane Reason is not capable of making a true Judgment of things, but when it is Compos'd, Quiet and Undisturb'd; and if once it becomes Clouded or Perplex'd, it is subject to Infinite Mistakes: It is with this, as with a Glass, which, if Clear and True, gives the exact resemblance of all Objects, but if Stain'd, Clouded or Crooked, shews nothing in its true Proportion or Colors. This may be observ'd in Men of the greatest Virtue, Wisdom, Learning and Experience, who when compos'd and settled, are capable of giving the best Advice; and yet if Consulted at a time, when Excessive Passion, Grief or Fear has disturb'd their Minds, are no more to be depended on, than Madmen or Fools; because these Passions put their Thoughts into that Disorder, that their

Reason

Reaſon is not then like a clear Glaſs or Light, but darkn'd with the Miſt and Confuſion of a Thouſand Tumultuous Imaginations, which ſo diſcompoſe their Senſes, that they neither hear nor ſee, but by halves, and ſo darken their Reaſon, that they diſcern nothing but very imperfectly. And if they have any Glimpſe of true Reaſon left, ſo as to be ſenſible of their Condition, they will make this uſe of it; to deſire thoſe, that conſult them, not to depend on what they then award, but come to them ſome other time, when having overcome the Surprize, they ſhall be in a better compoſure of Mind. And if this Advice be follow'd, the ſame Perſons will at their return, Experience the Truth of what is here ſaid, when they ſhall find themſelves oblig'd to repeat the Particulars of their whole Caſe to them again, and by this perceive, that whatever was ſaid to them before, was ſpeaking to the Deaf, and that they have no Memory or Senſe of all that was repreſented to them.

Hence may thoſe, who are ſubject to Scruples, apprehend, why they are not to reſt in the direction of their own Reaſon; becauſe their Minds are diſorder'd with Immoderate Solicitude and Fear, ſuch as never permitting their Judgments to be

be Sedate and Quiet, become an Habitual hindrance upon them, and render them as much unqualified for discerning or pronouncing aright, as the Persons abovemention'd, for the time they are prevail'd on by any over-ruling Passion. And to be the more sensible of this, let these consider the effects of Excessive Fear and Solicitude; how these make Men lose their Memory and Senses, darken the Judgment, and put all the Spirits into such an Agony, that whatever a Man could do with Perfection and Assurance, when in freedom of Mind, he can do nothing of it, when put into Disorder by these Passions. Wherefore, till these can gain so far upon themselves, as to free their Minds from the disturbance of their immoderate Fear and Anxiety, they must necessarily be led out of the way, if they hearken to their own Thoughts, and depend on the Direction of their own disturb'd Reason.

Q. *But if these, notwithstanding all their Fears, make use of such Princip'es, as are Rules for the Conduct of a Good Conscience, and such as all others follow, may not they thus frame their Judgment aright?*

A. No; for tho' the Principles be never so Sound, they are not capable of making the right use of them: They give the wrong

wrong turn to every thing; ſo that what ſerves as a Rule, to guide others in the way, by their ill Management, leads them out of it. Hence there are no Books ſo cautiouſly writ for the Conduct of Souls, but what they abuſe, to the encreaſe of their unhappineſs, ever picking out ſomething for keeping up their unreaſonable Diſquiets. And therefore their pretending to be guided in their Judgments, by the Soundeſt Principles, or Beſt Books, is no ſecurity to them againſt being led out of the way.

There is one Principle, which they abuſe above all others: All Divines agree, that no Perſon ought to do any thing, having a Doubt, whether it be Lawful, or a Fear of its being Unlawful; and that to do or act, as long as this Doubt or Fear continues, cannot be without Sin. And this now, which is a Help to others, proves to them a Rack. For their Misfortune is in being too Fearful; and hence their Fears are ever ready to call almoſt every thing into Doubt; ſo that there is ſcarce any thing they can ſay or do, but on one conſideration or other 'tis queſtion'd whether it be lawful; and ſo, by this Principle, the greateſt part of their Words and Actions are by them reputed Sinful.

Q. *And*

Q. And are they not Sins, if they act upon a Doubting Conscience?

A. It is so generally in others; but in them this Principle is not good; because their Fears are not Rational, but only the effects of their Distemper'd Imagination, which suggests Fears against all grounds of Reason, and therefore are such, as ought not to be regarded, but pass'd by with contempt: So that, as other Christians are bound to suspend all Action, as long as Rational Doubts put in their *Caveat*; so these ought to take no notice of their Doubts, because they are only Imaginary, and not sufficient to put a stop to any Proceeding; and therefore for them to Act against a Doubting Conscience, is so far from being Sinful, that it is generally the Surest Remedy for the Cure of the Evil, under which they labor.

Q. How shall they be convinc'd of their Doubts and Fears being only Imaginary?

A. By their own Experience; for whenever their Thoughts are more compos'd, they, upon Reflection, find there is no Reason to doubt of what before they had question'd, and that all their Perplexity proceeded from nothing, but the Confusion of their own Thoughts, which they could not then discover, because their Imagination was stronger

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in ſuggeſting Fears, than their Reaſon in depoſing them. And if they ſeldom recover that quiet, as to make this diſcovery of themſelves; yet they may ſoon obſerve this, upon conſulting their Director, who, upon a true Knowledge of their Indiſpoſition, will not allow them to give in the particulars of their Fears, but either enjoining them Silence, or ſhewing them to be Groundleſs, gives them ſufficient Reaſon to believe them Imaginary, whilſt he will not give them the Hearing in that Tribunal, to which all Sins of right belong, and ſo Condemns all ſuch Fears, as the Weakneſs of Phancy, and not the Effects of Reaſon. And if they were willing to be convinc'd, is not this repeated Experience enough to let know, what Judgment they ought to make of all their Fears, and that 'tis more their Duty to Act in Oppoſition to them, than take notice of them?

Q. *But if they look like Doubts to them, ſo as to appear Rational, what can they do?*

A. Is not the long Experience of their Reaſon ſo often deceiving them, ſufficient Motive now not to truſt it, nor gard the frequent Alarms it ſeems ſo often to give, in Crying out danger, where there is none? What Direction can they poſſibly have, if this will not do? Are not they

they willing to be deceiv'd, who take those for their Guides, who have often carried them out of the way? Truly here must be a strange Blindness, for Men to be so often deluded, and not to observe it; and as strange a Perverseness, if they see it, in still hearkning to their Informations, who have been so often False to them. Might not one here expect so much Reasoning at least as this? I have been many times disturb'd with Fears and Doubts, which tho' appearing Real, have prov'd afterwards to be nothing, but the Apprehensions of a vain Imagination: Why then shall I at present disquiet my self? I will therefore pass them by, and suspend all present trouble, till by Communicating my Suspicions with my Director, I shall then discover how groundless they are. Thus Men do in all other Cases; those, who are apt to be frighted with Shadows, and upon frequent Observation find them to be nothing, by degrees Work off those Terrors, and become more Courageous: Those, who perceive their Memory often failing them, will not be too Positive in relating the Particulars of what is past, but do it Modestly, and with submission to others better qualified: Those, who observe some Persons reporting things with Assu-

rance

rance and Confidence, many of which they afterwards discover to be False, will not be very Credulous afterwards in what they hear from them, nor let their Satisfactions or Fears be answerable to what their Relations seem to demand; because knowing them not to be Faithful in their Reports, but that thro' Heedlesness, Vanity, or a Romancing Temper, they are often very wide of the Truth, they hence think it more reasonable to suspect them, than give them Credit, and to suspend all Interior Motions, till they have some better Opportunity of being inform'd more exactly of the Truth. This is the Method of Wise and Observing Men; ever letting their Experience of Persons and Things be the Measure of the Confidence they are to place in them; and hence it is they are not so easily mov'd with what they hear or see, as others, because their Observation of having been often deceiv'd, makes them more jealous of whatever is propos'd, and receive all with Doubts, till some better Assurance appears to remove them, and determine their Thoughts. And those, who do not so, will never gain the Character of Wise, but being easily mov'd, shew they have more Lightness than Weight in them.

Now if this be a Necessary Rule for the Conduct

Conduct of Life, and to keep our Minds in a kind of Balance amidst the Uncertainties of this World, and there is no possiblity of Quiet without it; why should not these Christians endeavor to follow it, so to become *Spiritually Wise?* They are sensible enough, how great a hindrance their Interior Disturbance is, in the performance of their best Duties, both to God and Man, and into what endless Temptations it leads them: And the Experience they have so often had of their Disturbance being occasion'd by unreasonable Fears, one would think, were sufficient to inform them, that such Fears, deserve not to be regarded; and that all their Disturbance is as unreasonable as their Fears; and yet they go on, still hearkning to them, still attending to all their Suggestions, as if their Authority and Credit were still good, and are as apprehensive of Neglecting or Acting against them, as if they had been never yet impos'd on by them. Where now is the Wisdom of this? Where is the Improvement they have made of all their Experience; that they still go on, taking Shadows and Dreams for real Monsters, obstinately adhering to their own Thoughts, and giving Credit to all the Impulses of their Imagination, as if they

had never yet been deceiv'd by this Credulity. They see in their Temporal Affairs, how many Impertinent Difficulties they start, how many groundless Suspicions they raise, sufficient to perplex the Soundest Brain, if thought worth the considering; they see how every flying Report gives them an Alarm, Confounding their Spirits with Terror, and unreasonable Proposals of what they are to do, for their Security against the Dangers of their Imagination: In this they may be convinc'd, what their Temper is, and how groundless their Fears; and as they see others of more Solid Judgment pass them all by, and they themselves are often perswaded to sit still, amidst all their Apprehensions, and do nothing of whatever they then propose for their Safety, but are prevailed on to act against their own Fears; this being the best Wisdom they can then Practice, and absolutely necessary to save them from the imputation of Folly or Madness: So this same is the best way they can follow, in their Spiritual Concerns; and till, in these, they are prevailed on by better Judgments, to neglect and act against their own Apprehensions and Fears, they will never be truly Wise in seeking their own Peace without which they can expect no Comfort in whatever they do.

Q

Q. I question not, they might be easily prevail'd on to do so, and be govern'd by their Director in the Contempt of all their Fears, could they believe, he understood their Case: But this gives them a Distrust, because they think, he apprehends but very imperfectly what passes within them, as to the positive Consent they Interiorly give to Sinful Representations, and their frequent saying and doing things, which they believe to be Sins, and yet go on, notwithstanding all such Checks of Conscience. Many of these things give them Disturbance, which they not explicating so fully as they ought; and their Director often not giving Credit to them, or taking them to be better than they are, or not permitting them to give a Particular Account of what has pass'd within them, they hence believe their Case to very Different from what he apprehends; and how then can they so far depend on his Advice, which seems not proper for them, as to neglect or act against the evident Principles of their own Conscience?

A. This is the most Malicious Contrivance of a Subtle Enemy, to hold these poor Souls in his Snares, by rendring those Means unserviceable to them, in which God has appointed their Surest Remedy. For whereas he knows, they cannot be deliver'd from their Perplexity, and its ill

Conſequences, but by the Advice of thoſe who underſtand their Diſtemper, and all the Miſchiefs of it, he by this Deluſion renders their Authority ſuſpected, and furniſhes them with a plauſible Pretext, for not heark'ning to their Advice; and hence this is to be look'd on as the ſtrongeſt Chain, by which he keeps them ſtill unhappy under their Enchantment, and deprives them of all the Benefit of that, which is ordain'd for their Cure. And here, I may truly ſay, is their greateſt Misfortune, that their only help being in ſuſpecting and diſtructing themſelves, they are by this Artifice perſwaded to ſuſpect and diſtruſt every one beſides themſelves.

I wiſh therefore, for their ſakes, they would be convinc'd of this Snare, ſince otherwiſe their Evil muſt become Irremediable, and they cannot be excus'd from an intolerable Obſtinacy, in ſtanding out againſt the Means, the Divine Goodneſs has provided for their help, which cannot be eſteem'd leſs, than Reſiſting the Holy Ghoſt, and depending more on their own unreaſonable Fears, than the Ordinance of God. And now to deliver them from theſe their unjuſt Suſpicions, if it be in their Power to believe any thing, that does not favor their Inclination, I wiſh they

they would give Credit to this Assurance, I here give them; that there is no other Disorder of the Soul more evident to any Experienc'd Director, than that under which they labor; and tho' the Confus'd Motions of their Soul are Infinite in their Apprehensions, Fears, Consents and Acting contrary to suppos'd Principles of Right Justice and Truth; yet all these are as particularly known to him, as if they were all Painted out before him in Writing: So that, as in common Distempers, upon the first Feeling their Pulse, and discovering their ill Constitution, he can give them an account of what passes within them, even before they have expres's'd the particulars of their disorder'd Conscience; and if after some Experience of their Disease, he will not allow them to particularize their Aggrievances, 'tis because this is not now necessary for his Information, and cannot be permitted, without doing them injury. And whatever Suspicions they may still have of his mistaking their Case; yet when they have consulted Two or Three Able Men, and find them positively agreeing in their Sentiments concerning their Distemper, and in their Prescriptions for its Cure; when they Reflect, that these are Persons of Principles and Conscience, such as know

their own Souls to be engag'd for whatever Advice, they give their Penitents; and that if they give Directions, without knowing their State, who conſult them, they Act very Preſumptuouſly, and muſt be accountable for all the Conſequences of their Raſhneſs; I think from this Conſent of Directors, and from the Senſe of their Integrity, Prudence and Experience, they have reaſon to turn their Jealouſie upon themſelves, and rather ſuſpect the Miſtake to be on their own part, than theirs: And this more eſpecially, becauſe the Common Order of Juſtice allows not the Wiſeſt to be Judges in their own Caſe; the Eſtabliſh'd Diſcipline of the Church requires Subjection in them, and God Commands them to Hear and Obey; and therefore ſince all their Suſpicions are in favor of their own Thoughts, which has the Face of Pride, and withdraw them from their Obedience due to the Ordinance of God, which has Rebellion in it, I hope they may find ſufficient Motives in this to throw by all their Jealouſies, and yield themſelves, with all their Thoughts, in Obedience, where it is due, with the Confidence of that Holy Inſtitution, which God has ordain'd for the Direction of all, being ſufficient for them, and that this Obedience is better than Sacrifice.

Q. *Then*

Q. *Then you think, in this must be their Cure?*

A. Tis so ordain'd; the Pastors of the Church are the Ministers of God, appointed by him for Feeding the Flock, for Strengthning the Weak, for Comforting the Afflicted, for Enlightning the Perplexed; and it is by these God Speaks to his People, Manifests his Will, and gives them Opportunity of discovering and avoiding all the Snares of their own Corruption, and of their Common Enemy. Now all being enjoin'd to Hear and Obey, in this these Christians may see their Duty, and amongst the whole Body of the Faithful, have the least Reason to think themselves exempt; because having their Reason and Judgment weak'ned by Immoderate Fear, and a working Imagination, they are subject to the greatest Delusions, and therefore stand most in need of Advice; and their Obstinacy against it must be of very Dangerous Consequence. They have this Caution however to take with them, of not seeking out for a Director, that is subject to the same Infirmity with themselves; but to make Choice of the most Experienc'd and Prudent: And if they Consult more than one, for discovering with greater Assurance the unhappiness of

their Distemper, after that to abide constant to one, who being best acquainted with their Circumstances, will be best able to prescribe what is most for their Good.

Q. *And having found such a Director, in what are they to be Obedient to him?*

A. Their Obedience is to be Universal, but most strictly in those Particulars, which are the general Occasions of their Disquiet; and here they must use that violence upon themselves, as to act contrary to all their own Fears, Apprehensions, Imaginations, Reason and Judgment, in compliance with his Advice. This will be difficult, I know, at first; but Distempers far gone and Dangerous, must have Difficulties in their Cure; and to these the Patient must submit, because his Duty presses him to it, and his Reason may Incline him, because the Difficulties of the Remedy, have no proportion to those his Distemper gives him, and cannot be so lasting.

Hence therefore, as to what he shall prescribe, either in forbidding the Repetition of Prayers, or of past Confessions, or in not allowing such and such Particulars to be mention'd in Confession, or in requiring them to go to the H. Communion, without giving them Absolution, or not admitting them to Confession, or in whatever

ever other Cases there may be of this kind; they are to have no regard to any Interior Fears, Perswasions or Convictions of their own, but resolutely comply with the Particulars requir'd of them by their Director.

Q. *What, Omit in Confession such Sins, as they judge to have been Wilful; and go to the Communion, when they judge themselves in a State of Sin and Unworthy! Is not this to drive them into Despair?*

A. 'Tis to prevent Despair, by Curing the Evil, that leads to it. They are to do in every Particular, as I have now declar'd; and tho' Nature suffers a kind of Convulsion or Agony in the performance; yet they are not to be discourag'd, but force on their Way, notwithstanding all Opposition, in hopes of at length finding Peace for their Souls.

Q. *How are they to satisfie themselves in so doing?*

A. By their Confidence in the Advice of their Director, which being the Discipline ordain'd by God, may carry them on with Satisfaction, notwithstanding all Discouragements. They are to do as Travellers, in a difficult Journey, who having a Faithful Guide, follow his Conduct, tho' he leads them thro' Ways, which, in their Judgment, seem not to

them the Right or the Beſt: They are to do, as Sick Perſons, who in a Dangerous Diſtemper, obſerve the Preſcriptions of an Able Phyſician, well acquainted with their Conſtitution, tho' what he orders, be nothing agreeable to their own Apprehenſions, but ſeems to them more likely to do Harm than Good: In which Caſes, tho' the Private Thoughts and Fears of the Parties concern'd, rais'd ſome Difficulties; yet they Acquieſce ſtill in their Guide and Phyſician, thro' the Confidence they have in their Fidelity, and and Skill. In the ſame manner are theſe Chriſtians to ſatisfie themſelves: If they proceed not according to their own Judgment, and hence are diſquieted, they muſt remember, they follow a better Judgment than their own, that is, of their Director, who being free from their Anxious Fears, ſees every thing more diſtinctly, and judges more deliberately; and this being according to the Appointment of Chriſt and his Church, it ought to carry them on with Satisfaction; not with a Satisfaction of Nature, which will be uneaſie in being thus Contradicted, but with a Satisfaction of Reaſon and Faith, which is much more Solid and Chriſtian.

In this manner therefore may theſe Chriſtians reaſon againſt that Struggle, they

they find within, and endeavor to go on with Quiet; I have the Advice and Command of my Director for what I do; 'tis by the Appointment of Christ and his Church, I am to hear and be subject to him, and this for my Security, and the better Conduct of my Soul; I will therefore consider Christ and his Holy Spirit speaking to me by him, and however my own Fears and Reason give me other Directions, and suggest many Difficulties; yet I will submit all to Christ's Holy Ordinance, and with my Confidence in him, conclude I then go Right, when I observe the Advice of his Minister, under whose Care I am, and who has taken the Charge of my Soul.

Now if by the force of this Reas'ning, these Christians would violently break thro' all their seeming Difficulties, would order their Prayers, their Confessions and Communions, as they are directed, this, in some time, would Moderate their Fears, and the Importunity of all their Scruples, and bring them into such a Composure of Mind, that they might be able to perform all Duties with Comfort and Peace, which otherwise, without a Miracle, they can never expect.

This Practice is confirm'd by that Experience, which *Pet. Merchantius* says he had

had of a Learned and Holy Prieſt, who by the Divine Permiſſion, for his greater Humiliation, fell into this perplexing Diſorder, ſo that he could perform no one Duty, but with great Anxiety and Diſturbance of Infinite Scruples; and having for ſome time found the Inconvenience of this State, deſirous of Remedy, he ſought it in the ſtrict obſervance of theſe Two Particulars.

Firſt, In Conſulting his Director, he deſir'd him to give him his poſitive Advice, without confirming it with any Reaſons; becauſe he had ſo many apparent Reaſons ſuggeſted in favor of his Scruples, that no others could make any impreſſion on him. But for his Advice, he was reſolv'd to Reſt in it, notwithſtanding all Difficulties and Objections of his own againſt it.

Secondly, If in preparing to go to the Altar, he was diſturb'd with Scruples, and importun'd by theſe to ſeek relief by going to Confeſſion, he ſtood reſolutely, as he was order'd, againſt ſuch vexatious Perſwaſions, and perform'd the Sacred Myſteries, tho' with a Heart full of Anguiſh, and his Teeth ſtriking together, thro' the Agony in which he was. Having obſerv'd this Method for ſome time, he again recover'd his former Peace, and with

Comfort

Comfort perform'd the Duties of his Function. 'Tis by the same way others may hope to find relief; for however the reasoning of a Director may, for the time, while he is speaking, abate something of the Disturbance, yet this is only drawing a Skin over a Sore without Healing it, since his Back is no sooner turn'd upon them, but the force of their own Reasons stifle all his, and they soon return to their wonted Disquiets: Hence frequent Discoursing becomes unprofitable, does no real Good to the Penitent; and as little to the Director, except in the Exercise of his Patience, in pressing Reasons on those who are not capable of them. But for this other Way, in undertaking to do what the Director advises, and observing his Commands in Contradiction to all other apparent Reasons suggested from within, this is laying the Ax to the Root, and if there be a possibility of Remedy, it must come by this Method.

If therefore these Christians are not Fond of their Distemper, but Sincerely desire Relief, let them seek it in the Way, it which it is to be found. Let them not expect to be reason'd out of it, but desire their Director seriously to consider their State; and having concluded upon what

what is neceſſary for them to do, poſitively to declare it to them. Let them then ſet themſelves to a ſtrict Compliance, and tho' it be with Convulſions and Agonies of Spirit, let this put no ſtop to their proceedings, but go on ſtill as order'd in every Duty, with this Aſſurance, that they have no way of doing Right, but in doing what they are directed; and thus, tho' thro' many Storms, they may have hopes of coming at length to a Calm.

Q. *Then I ſee all your Confidence is in their Submiſſion and Obedience, and I think you you are in the Right; for ſince their Misfortune is in the diſorder of their Thoughts, which expoſing them to Infinite Miſtakes and Deluſions, is ever carrying them out of the Way, they can have no better help, than in giving their Hand to a Guide. But however, tho' you expect not to overcome them by Reaſon, but by Obedience only; yet for my Satisfaction, let me have a fuller Sight of the Reaſons, why they are under this neceſſity of a ſtrict Submiſſion.*

A. I have already told you the Reaſon, but if, like them, you oblige me to Repetition, I will here again remind you of it. Theſe Chriſtians are of a Fearful Temper, and, as Perſons once terrified, are apt to ſtart at every Shadow, and often

ten find themselves under great Apprehensions, where there is no true Reason for it, and with all the force of their Reason cannot prevent this Disturbance: So it is with these Christians; they are Fearful of every Appearance of Sin, their Fears cause Disquiets, and not only discompose their whole Interior, but likewise call in and multiply, to their greater Confusion, those very Thoughts, which, if neglected, would have pass'd by with very little impression; so that their Excessive Solicitude and Fear of offending is still encreasing their danger, and like little Birds fluttering on Lime-twigs, draws them farther into the Snare: This is the Misfortune of their Temper, but receives great Additions, from that Anxiety of Spirit into which they fall, which by its Oppression, as it weakens their Reason, so in proportion, it encreases their Natural Passion, and makes them still more Fearful; and hence, as in all other ill Habits, yielding to Fear, is the Way never to overcome it.

Then their Imagination being generally Quick and Active, every ill Object makes very strong impressions on it, and these as strongly affecting the Sensitive Part, their whole Man seems upon this seiz'd with Delight, answerable to the impressi-

ons;

ons; which being Sinful, they presently hence conclude, all is now lost; for that they have evidently consented to all, and are become a Prey to their Enemy.

Q. *And if they are thus Over-power'd, and Sensible of having consented, how are they in the Wrong?*

A. The Strength and malicious Activeness of their Imagination deceives them, whilst all that passes there they take to be their own Act, and do not distinguish, thro' their Confusion, the Representation of Consent, imprinted by Fear in their Phancy, from the deliberate Consent of the Will, which has all the while a Detestation and Horror of the Evil, to which they think they consent. But this they being not then able to observe, they hence condemn themselves of most notorious Guilt, from which, God and his Ministers, who know them, see them Clear.

Q. *How can they know this?*

A. From their Experience of them; for seeing them to be Persons of sound Principles, both as to Faith and Morals, that their Sincere Desire is to serve God faithfully, that their greatest Fear is of Sin, and their greatest Solicitude not to fall into it, that they are Apprehensive of whatever disposes to it, that they seek not the Occasions, that they have on their

their Spirits a continual Horror of being surpriz'd in those Circumstances, wherein, they apprehend, they Sin; that they have a Detestation of that Evil, to which they think, they consent; that in the very time, wherein they seem to consent, their Soul is in Anguish, because of the Consent, which they think, they have given; that they no sooner recover from their Confusion, but they are under an Oppression of Mind, Dejected, and Miserable in their own Thoughts, because of the Guilt incurr'd; and are now weary of Life, because, as they think, they cannot live, but in the frequent Displeasure of God. From these, and such like Observations, the Director discovers these to be in a good Habit of Soul, and that all those Horrid Representations, which perplex their Minds, are not their Act, but the Suggestions of an Enemy, or the Workings of their own Fears and Imagination; and hence comes the necessity of their submission to another's Judgment: Because being thus indispos'd for making a true Judgment of themselves, they can no otherwise stand under the weight of that Oppression, which carries them to Dejection and Despair, but by being powerfully over-rul'd, and oblig'd to Act in Contradiction to their own Fears. And however

however this Method may look Imperious, yet 'tis what their Infirmity renders necessary to them, and has more true Compassion in it, than to let them run on to a Precipice, by following their own ways.

Q. I see enough of this Necessity, and think it free from all Objection; for since the Priests of the Old Law were appointed by God to be Judges of the Leprosie amongst the People, and to discern betwixt Leprosie and Leprosie, with an Obligation on the People of observing their Orders; it must be now most reasonable, to leave the Judgment of Sin, to the Priests of Christ's Church; and it is an effect of an Infinite Mercy, that we have such Helps in a matter of this Concern, where Mistakes are so obvious, and yet so dangerous. But satisfie me in one thing; in describing the State of these Christians, you seem to judge them very unhappy; and yet, on the other side, you give such a good Character of them, that they seem more to be envied than pitied.

A. And are not they unhappy, in being subject to such Perplexities, which are as a perpetual Rack on their Spirits, hinder them in all Duties, and put them in danger of quitting all, and despairing of a better State? Here's enough to move Compassion,

Compassion, and to oblige those, who are concern'd, to give them all just Assistance. And yet to consider, that their Solicitude for doing well, their Fear of offending, the Trouble under the Thoughts of having offended, and the Sense of their Weakness, is the Occasion of all their Disquiets; these are Arguments of so good a Disposition, that could they but make a good use of it, in the moderation of their Perplexity, and preventing its Mischiefs, by a resolute Submission to their Director, I know no State, I should more envy than theirs. 'Tis upon the Knowledge of this their Disposition, a Director has no difficulty in obliging them to go to the Holy Communion, when they judge themselves unfit; and tho' they cannot do it, but with great disturbance, yet this is no Discouragement to him, because he sees, their Disquiets to be involuntary, and the effect only of a Natural Infirmity, which tho' hindering all sensible Devotion, does not exclude them from the more Substantial Benefits of that Sacred Mystery; and therefore would they observe his Orders in this Point, as in all others, they would do much better, than to deprive themselves of this Help, upon the Mistaken Judgment of their own Fears. Here you see the Opinion I have of them; and this

this I think so well grounded, that shou
God permit them to continue und
their usual Disquiets, even throughout the
last Sickness, and so expire, without an
sense of Comfort, I should not Doubt o
their End being Happy, because God b
ing Infinite in Mercy, and knowing the
Heart and Desires to be Sincere, will no
let the Misfortune of their Distemper be
Bar to his Goodness.

Q. You have said enough to this Point; but since you are sensible, how prejudicial their Perplexity is to their Memory, so that long Instructions cannot be Beneficial to them, will not you be so favorable, as to give them here the sum of what you have hitherto said?

A. I will: First then, they are to be watchful against all approaches of Sadness, not sit still in thoughtful Amusements, nor give way to Idleness: For all these help to encrease their Distemper.

Secondly, They are to endeavor to seek Comfort in God, tho' not in much Solitude, but only as shall be advis'd; Innocent Conversation is profitable, and in Working they cannot do too much.

Thirdly, If Scrupulous Difficulties perplex their Minds, they are to suspect all the Suggestions of their own Fears; and not trust the Information of their Rea

son,

son, tho' it seems to carry Evidence with it.

Fourthly, They are to be Cautious in Reading Spiritual Books, and not Torment themselves with what was never intended for them: They are not to depend on the Soundest Principles in their own Hands, because they give the wrong turn to every thing.

Fifthly, They have no Security, but in the Advice of a Director; they must not chuse one like themselves; nor run from one to another, in hopes of finding one to favor all their Phancies; but be constant in consulting him, whose Prudence and Experience qualifie him for their Direction.

Sixthly, They must be Resolute in following his Advice, and not let their own Apprehensions or Fears withdraw them from what he prescribes.

Seventhly, They must not expect to overcome their Difficulties by Reas'ning against them, but by doing violence to them in a strict compliance with their Director's Orders, without regarding whatever strength of Reason they seemingly carry with them.

Eighthly, They must not excuse themselves from this necessary Obedience, upon pretext of his not understanding their Case,

Case, or of their not having fully expli cated it; or of his not believing them or supposing them to be better than the are.

Ninthly, But they must desire him po sitively to Command, and they must as po sitively Obey, in all Particulars belongin to Praying, to Confessing, to Receivin *&c.* His Judgment must be their Rule and tho' their Reason gives other Direct ons, they must satisfie themselves, having the Direction of a safer Judgmen than their own.

Tenthly, If the Thoughts of their unwor thiness, or other, tho' the most Abominable Suggestions, disturb them in the perfor mance of their Duties, let them eithe dissemble the seeing them, or pass the by with as much Contempt as possible but by no means sink under them, as ap prehending all they do to be to no purpos

Eleventhly, If throughout their last Sick ness, and at the Hour of Death, the Minds should be perplext with the like Thoughts, tho' even of a seeming De spair; yet let them not think all lost, bu retain Hope still in the Superior Part o their Soul, confiding in the Infinite Mercy of God, that he, who sees all to be Distemper and Infirmity, and that they have a Horror of the Evil, will have Com passion on them.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Instructions for Christians subject to Spiritual Driness in Prayer, &c.

THE Desire of finding Comfort in what we do, is Natural to all; but this being the Desire of the Natural Man, they, who proceed upon better Principles, than those which Nature suggests, are not to seek present Comforts in what they do, but perform all Duties, with the hopes of finding Everlasting Comforts in the Possession of God. Hence all their Business is center'd in this One Point, of considering, What is the Will of God; what Duties he requires of them for the gaining Everlasting Life: And having settled this Point, then to make this the Principal Business of their whole Lives, to perform such Duties with the greatest Fidelity, and in the best manner they are able, according to the Circumstances in which they are. And whilst the End of all they do, is for the coming at length to the Presence of God, their great Solicitude is so to perform all, that this may be the effect of what they do; but as to all other effects, which

which regard this Life only, whether i
Temporal Blessings, Interior Peace, or Se
sible and Present Comforts, they are to e
deavor to bring their Minds to as great a
Indifferency as they are able, leaving the
wholly to the Pleasure of God, to gra
or deny them, as shall seem good in h
Eyes: If he be favorable at any time, i
giving such Encouragements, to infir
Nature, they receive them with Thank
giving, but without placing any Con
dence in them; and if he shews no favo
in this way, they go on still with an equa
Fidelity; because 'tis not the Presen
Comforts of God they here Work fo
but for God himself in the Life that is y
to come.

Q. *Would you not therefore have Chri
stians desire these Sensible Comforts in the
Devotions?*

A. Nature will never fail of desirin
what is so pleasing to it; and Piety, whil
yet imperfect, is ever Solicitous for thes
Encouragements; but where it is mor
advanc'd, it is jealous of all Sensible Con
solations, because it observes, how ready
Self-love is to lay hold of these; and
therefore being Apprehensive, lest the
Sense of these Comforts should become
some Motive in the exercise of Prayer, i
chuses rather to renounce or pass them by

with

with Indifferency, than rejoice in them; that ſo the Love of God and its Duty may have the whole Influence in whatever it does, and that it may perform no part of its Duty, becauſe of the Comforts, found in it, but becauſe it is the Will of God he ſhould be Faithful in it.

This is the moſt perfect Rule a Chriſtian can follow in this Mortal State, and thoſe, who are yet at a diſtance from Perfection, tho' they cannot come up to it, yet they ought to keep their Eye upon it, ſo to ſecure themſelves againſt unreaſonable Diſquiets, which otherwiſe will prove their Diſcouragement in all Duties.

Q. What therefore would you have thoſe Pious Souls do, who are ſubject to theſe Diſquiets?

A. I have already propos'd a Rule to them in the practice of the Beſt Chriſtians. I would have them firſt conſider, with Advice, What are the Exerciſes of Devotion proper in their Circumſtances and State; and this is to conſult, What may be the Will of God, that they ſhould do. Here is the firſt Principle of the Practical Chriſtian, which, as Interior or Exterior Circumſtances differ, may be ſubject to new Conſultations. This being concluded, and left with ſome latitude, for preventing Anxiety,

2dly, I would have them use serious Endeavors to perform them Faithfully according to the Circumstances, in which they are; considering what they do, to be the accomplishing the Will of God, and the means of bringing down his Blessing upon them, and coming at length to the happy possession of him.

3dly, Having propos'd this, as the Motive and End of what they do, I would have them be as indifferent as they can, as to all other effects of their Devotion, and other Spiritual Duties, and particularly as to sensible Comforts or Sweetness; leaving this wholly to God, either to grant or deny them; so as neither to perform any Duty in hopes of such Comforts, or depend on them, when they feel them, nor yet grieve when they find them not.

Q. *Why are they not to depend on them, when they feel them?*

A. Because, as S. *Francis Sales* observes, (who has treated admirably on this Subject, *Introd. p.* 4. *c.* 13. to whom I refer the Reader for his greater satisfaction) such sensible Affections proceed sometimes from a tenderness of Constitution only, which is easily mov'd by being susceptible of all Impressions; and sometimes from the Enemy, who, to amuse us, inclines the Imagination to such Affections,

fections, ſo to pleaſe us for the preſent, and give us falſe hopes of all being well, and to prevent our looking farther: Whence it comes, that many, who experience this Sweetneſs in their Devotion, live on in great Diſorders, without any real change of the Heart, deceiv'd by theſe Subtilties of the Devil, and reſting contented with theſe uncertain Signs of Devotion, without ſearching for the truth of it, which conſiſts in a Will Conſtant, Reſolute, and Active, in putting in execution whatever is the known and acceptable Will of God.

Q. *Why are they not to grieve, when depriv'd of theſe Comforts?*

A. Becauſe God has no regard to what they ſenſibly feel, but to the Fidelity, with which they perform their Devotions; and if they are ſincere in this, applying their Minds to what they are doing, in the beſt and moſt ſerious manner they are able, according to preſent Circumſtances, they hence ground a Confidence, that God will hear their Prayers, and that they may be available to their Eternal Happineſs: And this being the end of all they do, they rejoice in this Hope, and find Comfort in their Souls, the more ſolid, the leſs it is ſenſible.

Q. *But is it not a comfortless thing for a Christian to seek God in Prayer, and other Duties, and yet find nothing of him; but to go thro' all these Exercises, with a Soul dry, barren, and oppress'd with such Darkness, that it seems, as if God had forsaken him, and left him in the hardness of Heart?*

A. If this Barrenness abides for any long time, it is a great discouragement, such as is generally followed with Disquieting Fears, with Melancholy, and a great Anxiety of Spirit, and requires the attendance of a careful Hand, to prevent a total Oppression. But this proceeds from want of Courage, or from ill Management. For since all this may be the effect of Constitution, or of immoderate Solicitude, or of the Divine Will, permitting such Trials for greater Perfection, and the Prayer may be very acceptable, notwithstanding all this Dryness of Spirit, all such Grief and Fears are unreasonable, and very much help to the encreasing that Indisposition, which they desire to Remedy.

It were therefore much more to their purpose, when in these Circumstances, to lay open their State to some Prudent Guide, and having Assurance from him, that, whatever is the Occasion of their Interior Darkness, it can be no prejudice to their Souls, if they will but go on Courageous

geous under it, Faithfully diſcharging all Duties to the beſt of their power; to proceed with the Conſtancy he adviſes, and not waſte their Spirits in unprofitable Sights, but turn their whole Endeavors in making the beſt uſe of the Circumſtances in which they are.

Q. How is this to be?

A. By conſidering, that no Exerciſes of Devotion can be better, than thoſe, which are not carried on by Humor, or the Encouragement of Senſible Comforts, but only by the Light of Faith: And therefore if theſe Chriſtians would go on with reſolution in the performance of their Duties, without regarding or reflecting, whether they find Comfort or no Comfort, whether they are in Darkneſs or Light, whether in Sadneſs or Joy, this Fidelity, ſupported by Faith only, without any help of Senſe, would add a value to all they do, and be a moſt Effectual Means of bringing them to more Solid Comforts, than thoſe which at preſent are denied them.

Then if they would conſider this more in Particular, how every ſervice we perform to God, is the more Perfect, in Proportion to the Difficulties and Diſcouragements we meet: That he is the more Faithful Servant, who having no World-

ly Comfort to carry him on, but being oppos'd both by Men and Devils, is ſtill true to his Duty. It was made no matter of wonder, even to Satan, that *Job* ſerv'd God, and was Faithful to him, whilſt he found the reward of his Fidelity in all manner of Bleſſings and Temporal Comforts; but it was his greater Commendation, when being Afflicted on all ſides, he ſtill continued Conſtant to his Principles, and permitted not the Severeſt Trials to be the interruption of his Duty. This was the praiſe of *Toby*, who was not only Faithful to God in time of Peace, but perſever'd in his Fidelity under Perſecution, when he had the Laws of Unbelievers to terrifie him, the Hazard of his Family, and the Darkneſs of the Night to diſcourage him. This ſame was the Commendation of the Apoſtles, and other Primitive Chriſtians, who having the World and Hell arm'd againſt them, were ſo ſtrongly influenc'd by the Power of Faith, and the Senſe of their Duty, that they went ſtill on with Courage, without letting the want of Temporal Comforts be any leſſning to their Fidelity or Zeal.

If theſe Chriſtians would ſeriouſly conſider this truth, they might in this find Reaſon to ſuppreſs all Grief; and lay a Foundation of Hopes, that if they Perſe-

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vere in the Faithful Performance of the Duties of their State, that Darkneſs and Heavineſs of Spirit, under which they are, may be ſo far from rendering them diſpleaſing to God, that they may even make a great Advantage of their Burthen, and raiſe themſelves to a more Eminent degree of Virtue by that which ſeems to be their Opppeſſion. Since if they go on with Conſtancy, 'tis evident, in their Caſe, they have nothing of Humor, no Satisfaction of Senſe or Self-love to bear any part in their Devotions, but all is done upon the better Motives of Faith, in complying with the Will of God, and for the working out their Salvation. And tho' Nature may here find Reaſon to grieve, yet ſince Faith affords matter of Joy, this is much more to the purpoſe, than that which is built on the Satisfaction of Senſe.

Q. *Then you are of Opinion, that this State of Darkneſs is better than that of Light and Sweetneſs?*

A. I do not Compare the States; but ſay, that thoſe Chriſtians, who are Conſtant in their Duties in time of Interior Drineſs, give greater Arguments of their Fidelity, than others, who have Senſible Comforts to Encourage their Devotion; and if they would ſubmit to the Difficulties of their State with Humility and Pa-

tience, they would have no Reaſon to eſteem themſelves Miſerable.

Q. *If this be ſo, there muſt be yet great Difficulty, in being practically convinc'd of the Advantage, that is to be made of this Barrenneſs; for I fear the greatſt part of thoſe, who are ſubject to it, are rather inclin'd to think God Angry with them, and that he has given them over to a Reprobate Senſe.*

A. 'Tis a State of Trial and Difficulty, and no Improvement can be made of it, but by reſolutely ſtanding againſt all the weight of Inclinations to Dejection, and Impatience, and by manly Endeavors ſupporting the Soul with Hope, amidſt all that Heavy Darkneſs, which ſeems wholly to ſeparate it from God. Now there being a great ſtrength of Faith neceſſary for this, and a perſevering Patience for the going on with Conſtancy, where there is neither Light nor Comfort to Encourage them; thro' the want of this Patience and Faith, the greateſt part of Chriſtians make not that Improvement of this Trial, which otherwiſe they might; but lye down under the Oppreſſion, overrul'd by the Suggeſtions of a Cowardly and Impatient Fear. And hence it is, their Minds are ever darken'd by the Clouds rais'd by this unmanly Paſſion, apprehending

prehending God to be Angry, and that ſince he has withdrawn himſelf, all their Labors muſt be in vain. Thus they lye ſtill in a Spiritual Sloth, ſpending their Souls in unprofitable Sadneſs and Complaints of their unhappineſs, when, would they be perſwaded to ſtruggle with their Oppreſſion, and be conſtant in the performance of a Comfortleſs Devotion, they might thus hope for a return of Light, or make their Darkneſs Advantageous to them.

Q. Well, but is there not Reaſon to Apprehend God to be Angry, when they ſeem thus forſaken by him?

A. I do not deny, but it may be ſometimes the effect of his Anger; and therefore 'tis adviſeable for Chriſtians, when in theſe Circumſtances, to examine all their Ways, and uſe Endeavors for reforming whatever, upon good Advice, can be ſuſpected as the Occaſion of the Divine Diſpleaſure. But if we ſuppoſe it the effect of God's Anger, yet Chriſtians have not Reaſon on this account, to lye ſtill Lamenting their Misfortune, but be Induſtrious in conſidering how to make a good uſe of his Chaſtiſements; for ſince in the Chriſtian Syſtem, the Juſtice of God is many times the effect of his greateſt Mercy, in Correcting whom he loves,

they may find, under his Chastisement, sufficient Motives of rejoicing, as the Prophet did; *Confitebor tibi, Domine, quoniam iratus es mihi. I will praise thee, O God, because thou art Angry with me.* For his Anger carrying with it the design of their Amendment, there may be reason, 'tis true, of grieving for their Sins, by which they have provok'd it; but there cannot want matter of Joy too, except only in their being wanting in their just Endeavors of improving under it.

Thus, if we suppose their Dryness of Spirit to be even that, which their Fears suggest, yet it must be unreasonable to lye still lamenting their Misfortune, when to answer the designs of a Merciful Providence, they are bound to labor, by Humility and Patience, to make a better use of it, in order to their Eternal Good. But however they may have this Assurance of Comfort, amidst the Dark Impressions of their Fears, that tho' this Interior Barrenness be sometimes the Chastisement of Sin, yet it is many times an Exercise of God's most Faithful Servants, permitted for their greater Perfection; that their Fidelity may be thus tried, and they have Opportunity given them of encreasing in the true Knowledge of themselves, in Humility, Patience, and their greater Dependance

pendance on God. Hence we find the Greateſt Saints, for the Comfort of the Faithful, have left it recorded, how much they have ſuffer'd in this Point: *David*, in his Pſalms, often mentions theſe ſeeming withdrawings of God; that he appear'd in his Holy Place, as Dry and Barren Earth, that his Soul was become Dry and Wither'd. *Sicut Uter in pruina*, as a piece of Leather contracted and ſhrunk up by the Froſt, and that God had forſaken him. S. *Bernard* often complains of this Barrenneſs, that he could find neither Light nor Comfort, nor any Senſe of God in his Prayers: S. *Catherine* of *Siena* ſays, this was her Exerciſe for many Years, in which ſhe found great difficulties in going on without any Taſte or Comfort in all ſhe did; but however, that God recompenc'd the Drineſs of thoſe Barren Years, with Plenty of Heavenly Sweetneſs, which afterwards overflow'd her Soul.

Now if this be one of the Trials, by which God proves the Fidelity of his Servants, why ſhould theſe Chriſtians mourn, as if under the certain Diſpleaſure of God, when you ſee, there may be nothing of Anger in it, but only an Execution of an Order of Providence, which for raiſing Chriſtians to a greater degree of Virtue,

Virtue, and to purifie it from all the dregs of Self-love, leads them thro' dark and difficult ways, so to try their Faith and Hope, and render them independent of all Sensible Comforts.

Q. *But may not they reasonably fear their Hearts are hardned, since there is nothing belonging to God, can make any Impression on them, but they remain wholly Insensible amidst all their Exercises of Devotion?*

A. There is no reason to apprehend this; for there may be great Heaviness and Darkness upon the Spirits, where there is no Hardness of Heart. Those Christians, who live in the practice of known Sins, and being not mov'd by the Light of Grace, that touches them, nor by the Advice of Books or Friends, that call upon them, nor by the Examples of the Good, that reproach them, nor by the Mercy of God, that invites them, nor by his Justice, that threatens them, but go on following their own ways, obstinate against all these Means of Grace; these Christians, I say, may justly condemn themselves of being hardned in Sin, and deliver'd up to a Reprobate Sense: But as for the others, of whom you speak, who apprehending God to have withdrawn himself from them, are continually lamenting their Misfortune, are in perpetual trouble for fear of God's Displeasure,

Diſpleaſure, earneſtly deſire the return of his Grace, are ever with great Solicitude enquiring, what they ſhall do to be deliver'd from their unhappy State, are ready to undertake whatever is propos'd, would give any thing for the purchaſe of Heavenly Comfort; this is ſo far from Hardneſs of Heart, that there appear Signs of a very good Diſpoſition of Soul, ſuch as is ſufficient to move Heaven to Mercy, were they guilty of the greateſt Crimes. And hence I cannot but put theſe Chriſtians in Mind, that all ſuch Apprehenſions of their Hearts being hardned, are only the Natural Effects of their great Oppreſſion, ſuch as the Devil is very induſtrious to improve, that ſo he may perſwade them to lay aſide all Duties, and by weak'ning their Hope, force them by degrees into Deſpair. And therefore they muſt remember, 'tis their great buſineſs, to be watchful againſt all ſuch Suggeſtions, and never give them opportunity of ſeizing on them, by ſitting ſtill under the Charm of Melancholy Amuſements; but throw them off with violence, ever ſtrengthning themſelves in Hope, and reſolving to wait with Patience for the return of Heavenly Light; and in the mean time, to truſt with a firm Confidence in God, tho' they ſee themſelves

encompaſs'd

encompaſs'd with Darkneſs, and even wit the Shadow of Death: With this Aſſu rance, that if they can hold out with Pa tience under this Trial, and perſevere i Hope, all that Oppreſſion, under which they lye, tho' it deprives them of all Inte rior Comfort, yet it can do them no rea prejudice, as to their Eternal Good.

Q. *If you apprehend their Diſpoſition to b ſo good, then you would adviſe them t continue all their Exerciſes of Prayer, tho' ſenſible of neither Comfort nor Benefit i them?*

A. Yes; for that ſenſible Comfort be ing not the End of their Prayers, the want of this ought to be no Motive for giving them any Interruption: And as this Comfort is not the End, ſo it is not to have place amongſt the Principal Bene fits of Prayer; whence they may par take largely of many others more con ſiderable, tho' they find nothing of this. 'Tis a great Benefit of Prayer, to be ſup ported in Hope amidſt Interior Darkneſs; 'tis a Benefit, not to be abandon'd to the Suggeſtions of their own Fears, and the Devil; 'tis a Benefit not to ſeek Senſual Comforts in the want of Spiritual; 'tis a Benefit to perſevere in the Deſire of God's Grace, and in the Fear of Eternally loſing him: Theſe, and infinite other Bene fits,

fits, they may receive by Prayer, tho' they feel not the leaſt degree of any ſenſible Sweetneſs, & therefore their Prayers ought not to be omitted upon the want of this.

'Tis true in an extraordinary Caſe, where a Perſon being exceſſively Afflicted for not being able to Pray, and this Paſſion working with greater violence, upon taking up a Prayer-book, ſo as then to put all into Confuſion, I have known it adviſ'd to quit the uſual Prayers for a time, that ſo Nature being more compos'd, by withdrawing the occaſion of the Commotion, the Prayers might be afterwards taken up again with greater Peace. But this being an extraodinary Caſe, the Advice is not to be indifferently follow'd by all in this diſorder; ſince this may be yielding to the Deſigns of an Enemy, who propoſes nothing more, than firſt to give Diſquiet by this inward Drineſs, and then withdraw Chriſtians from their Exerciſes of Devotion. However, it may be adviſable to all in this Perplexity, to change their Prayers, and to try, by variety of Books, to give ſome Motion to the Spirit; as likewiſe to change their Place of Prayer; for ſometimes ſome little relief may be found by this way; but if it affords none, and after all Endeavors, their Prayers are ſtill without Taſte; let them

them Confeſs at leaſt their Miſery before God, and without Anxiety or Impatience complain of his hiding himſelf from them. *Uſquequo!* How long, O Lord, how long! Let them ſend up ſome ſhort Ejaculations of Spirit, ſometimes in begging Mercy, ſometimes Patience, ſometimes Hope, &c. And if with a true ſenſe of their extreme Poverty they can pronounce theſe words of *David*; *Ego vero egenus & pauper ſum, Deus adjuva me: I am poor and needy, O God help me*; this ſincere Acknowledgment and hearty Prayer, may be as effectual in prevailing with God in their Diſtreſs, as longer Devotions in time of Peace: And then, if they daily labor to humble themſelves more and more in the long Experience of their own nothing, and of the nothing of all they can do, this profound Humility may be a Compenſation for all other wants, and render them more acceptable to God in their ſeeming diſtance from him, than more frequent Devotions at other times.

Q. *And what would you have them do as to frequenting the Sacraments?*

A. All their Diſcouragements of wanting Senſe and Life in what they do, ought to be no hindrance in theſe Duties; and therefore however they ſeem to perform all without benefit, yet they ought not to omit

omit them upon this account; but compoſing their Minds, as well as they can, and leaving the effects to God's ſecret Providence, be as conſtant in them, as at other times, or rather more frequent, as it ſhall be advis'd them.

Q. *But if there appear no good Diſpoſitions in them, how can they venture upon theſe great Duties?*

A. There may not be Diſpoſitions of Senſe in them; but there are much better, which are thoſe of the Heart. I have already told you the Signs by which I judge their Souls to be well diſpos'd towards God. Conſider but the trouble of Mind in which they are, upon the Apprehenſion of God being departed from them, and when you reflect, that we never grieve immoderately for the loſs of any thing beſides what we love, and this Grief is the ſureſt Demonſtration of our love, while we are indifferent as to other things, neither pleas'd in their poſſeſſion, nor concern'd in their loſs; and hence you may have ſtrong Motives of the Love of God, and Deſire of poſſeſſing him, ruling in their Hearts, ſince the exceſſive Grief upon the ſuppos'd loſs of him, cannot well proceed from any other Root, but the Love they have for him. Then again, if you reflect upon the ſtrange indifferency

cy they are brought to by this Grief, i
regard of all worldly Satisfactions; ther
being nothing of all that is generally a
mir'd, that they seek or desire, but ar
like Persons wholly Crucified to th
World, without regarding the Inclinat
ons of Sense or Self-love; you may i
this see not only how great their troubl
is, and make some judgment of the
Love for God; but likewise discover s
much of Hearts abstracted from th
World, that it is enough to be the Caus
of Emulation, to those, who are reputed
the best of Christians, and gives them
very much the preference to many others
who approach to the Altar with a greate
Sense of Devotion: For how few of thos
mov'd with Fervor and Sweetness, ca
with truth say like these, that they valu
nothing in this World, and could readil
forsake it all? Now tho' this may be oc
casion'd in them by Grief, yet if the Lov
of God be at the Root of this Grief, a
there is reason to hope, truly these are n
to be thought indispos'd for our Lord'
Table; but it were to be wish'd, that a
those, who are sensible of greater Fe
vor, had not more reason to suspect them
selves indispos'd, thro' their strong adhe
sion to dangerous Objects, and little obstru
ction from the World and its Follies.

The

The great Diſadvantage, and only Motive of Fear in theſe Chriſtians, is from that Dulneſs, which oppreſſes their Spirits; this cannot but give them ſome Diſquiet, in depriving them of that Comfort, which they ſo eagerly deſire; and yet thoſe, who obſerve how all paſſes within them; that this very heavineſs is occaſion'd by their exceſſive Solicitude of doing all things well; that not being able to come up to what they propoſe, this firſt cauſes trouble; this trouble, upon meeting frequent occaſions, by degrees grows into Anxiety; this Anxiety clouds their Minds, till at length, they lye oppreſs'd under a univerſal Darkneſs; thoſe, I ſay, who obſerve this, and ſee, their Diſappointments in not doing ſo well, as they deſire, and their Immoderate Solicitude for being freed from their common Weakneſſes, is the great occaſion of all their Dulneſs, will in this diſcover, that however there may be Indiſcretion, yet there is ſtill nothing that renders them diſpleaſing to to God, nor indiſpoſes them for approaching to his Sacred Myſteries; rather, there is reaſon to hope, that God, who ſees all theſe Motions within them, and knows them to ſpring from the earneſt deſire of performing all Service to him with Fidelity and Exactneſs, may be more

pleas'd

pleas'd with their Darkneſs, than in other Light and Sweetneſs, which being often not grounded in Charity, has more of Nature and Senſe in it than of true Devotion.

And hence, upon Experience of ſuch Perſons, in obſerving the Riſe and Progreſs of their Oppreſſion, and finding it to be the effect of a Holy, tho' Ill-manag'd, Solicitude, or of a Melancholy Temper only, I cannot look on them, as unprepar'd, but think, their beſt way, is to be reſolute in following Direction, and not take upon them to be their own Judges, in depriving themſelves of what they are advis'd to partake. They muſt endeavor therefore in all, whatever they do, to keep up their Spirits againſt Dejection and Fear, and let their Hopes be meaſur'd, not by their own Apprehenſions, but by the Judgment of thoſe, who know them better than they do themſelves; this Hopes muſt carry them thro' all Duties, depending on the Light, which others have, who direct them, while they have nothing but Darkneſs within: And if, God ſo permitting, this Darkneſs and Oppppreſſion ſhould continue even in their laſt Sickneſs, and when the Agony of Death is upon them, yet ought they ſtill perſevere with their Hope in God, con-

confiding in him, when they ſee nothing in themſelves to truſt to; for this is the Hope of all that are truly Humble; and then they need not doubt, notwithſtanding all their Fears, but that God will have mercy, who judges not the Infirmities of a diſtemper'd Mind, but will have regard to thoſe better Diſpoſitions, which, tho' hid from them, he ſees within them.

For the help of Memory, I now ſet down the Principal Heads of theſe Inſtructions, for the better regulating their Minds, who are under this Trial.

Firſt, Then they ought to remember, that Barrenneſs of Spirit, and Drineſs in Prayers, is not a Sign of God's Anger, or of their Hearts being hardned, but a Spiritual Affliction, with which he has often exercis'd his moſt Faithful Servants.

Secondly, Whether it be an Effect of God's Anger or no, yet it may be ſtill a Mercy to them, if they make but a good uſe of it.

Thirdly, That the beſt uſe of it, is in ſubmitting with Humility and Patience to all the trouble of it, and perſevering with their Faith and Hope in God, amidſt all their Diſcouragements.

Fourthly, That for this End, they ought to be conſtant in all Spiritual Duties,

ties, tho' they perform them without Senſe or Comfort: The Fidelity to God being there greater, where there is no ſenſible Encouragement in his Service.

Fifthly, They are to frequent the Sacraments, as they ſhall be advis'd, and not let their own Fears be their Judge in this Point, when they have a much Safer Guide to direct them.

Sixthly, They are to endeavor, in ſhort Ejaculations of Mind, to complain of their Weakneſs and Wants, and beg for help; and if they can ſay nothing elſe with any Feeling, let them try to ſay thus, at leaſt, *O God, Help me.*

Seventhly, They are to Humble themſelves under their Oppreſſion, and endeavor, thro' their Darkneſs, to ſee their own nothing. This Knowledge of themſelves, and a true Humiliation, may be of greater Advantage than all thoſe Comforts they deſire.

Eighthly, They are not to ſit down under the Melancholy Thoughts of their Misfortune, but reſolutely break off theſe, by bowing down before God, and ſaying, *O Lord, thy Will be done.*

Ninthly, Yielding to Diſquiet, Solicitude and Anxiety of Spirit, is the encreaſe of their Evil, in adding ſtill new Clouds to their Darkneſs.

Tenthly,

Tenthly, Their beſt way therefore, is to perform all Duties, as well as they can, in their Circumſtances, and endeavor to be contented with this; deſiring however greater ſupplies of Grace, but peaceably waiting God's time for this. This Method will leſſen their Solicitude, and calming their Spirits, prepare them for the return of Light.

CHAP. IV.

Inſtructions for Chriſtians diſturb'd with troubleſom Temptations.

I ſpeak not here to thoſe Chriſtians, who living in a State of Vicious Liberty, expoſe themſelves to all manner of Temptations; for their Caſe is too clear, in being Guilty of whatever they ſuffer in this kind, by drawing them on themſelves in the wilful Occaſions they give to them: Nor to thoſe, who, tho' avoiding what is directly Criminal in it ſelf, yet live on in a State of Idleneſs, delighted in all the dangerous Liberties of the World, and, thro' Remiſneſs or Contempt of Chriſtian Diſci-

Diſcipline, take but little Care in the performance of thoſe Exerciſes and Self-denials, which are neceſſary for the Eſtabliſhment of Virtue, and the beſt Security againſt Sin; for theſe go ſo far from the Goſpel-way, and are Guilty of ſuch a general Neglect of all that belongs to their Eternal Good, that they muſt anſwer for whatever Temptations they ſuffer, being ever faulty, in yielding to them, or at laſt in being the Wilful Occaſions of them.

Q. *Do you then condemn theſe, whom you call Idle Chriſtians, of all the Evils, with which their Minds are aſſaulted, if they are careful, upon Reflection, to ſuppreſs them?*

A. This Care is not eaſily to be ſuppos'd; for theſe, thro' their great familiarity with what is Evil, and thro' the want of applying their Minds to the ſtudy of true Virtue, by degrees loſe the Senſe of what is Sinful, and tho' they may make reſiſtance againſt bare-faced Vice, yet how many degrees of Evil do they admit, ſuch as are injurious to Chriſtian Purity, without taking any Alarum from ſuch Aſſaults? They are too Bold and Hardy to be concern'd at ordinary Faults; and hence their Reflection being not eaſily awaken'd, the Oppoſition made after this, is generally too late to become a Plea for their Innocence. Their Fault therefore

is,

is, in not being apprehensive enough of Sin, but to go on securely, as long as they keep out of the depth of Vice: Their fault is in not being so Solicitous for the Interest of Virtue, as to be watchful in avoiding those Occasions, which threaten its Overthrow: Their fault is in dwelling in the midst of Dangers, unmindful of their own Weakness, and of their dependance on him, from whose Hand all help must come. In fine, their fault is so manifold, such as betrays a want in the very Substantial Principles of a Christian, in perferring their Private Satisfactions to their Souls Eternal Interest, in exposing all this to hazard, for gratifying their Corrupt Inclinations, and in being so very little Solicitous for what they are bound to seek in the first place; that I fear all their Temptations will be set down to their Neglect or Folly; and it will be no excuse from their being Sinful, that, after what they call Reflection, they have made resistance against them. I speak not therefore to these here, for the thing they have to learn, is to begin to be Christians; 'tis in vain for them to of Temptations, when the whole Course of their Lives is to be chang'd; and till this be done, they have no Concern in this part of my Advice.

The Persons therefore concern'd here, are those more Regular and Pious Christians, who being Industrious in the Work of their Salvation, and generally Careful in avoiding the Common Dangers of Sin, are yet disturb'd with variety of Temptations, such as not only give them Disquiet in the frequent interruption of their best Exercises, but sometimes seize them with so much violence, as seemingly to overwhelm their Souls, and give them Occasion of fearing, that by their Consent, they have lost all their Interest in God.

For the Direction and Comfort of these, I here put them in Mind, First, that Temptations are one of the Exercises, which God gives to all his Servants; that the greatest Saints have had their Fidelity tried by this way, as they themselves have left Recorded for our Encouragement; and that our B. Redeemer, in permitting himself to be Tempted by the Devil, has in this given us this Instruction, that Temptations are unavoidable in this Mortal State, and that 'tis the Order and Will of God, that excepting Infants, who Die before the use of Reason, none shall be Sav'd, but by fighting against, and overcoming the Devil.

Secondly,

Secondly, That tho' this Order of God carries difficulty with it, yet 'tis an Effect of his Mercy, deſigning by this Method, not only to try, but to perfect thoſe that belong to him: For 'tis thus their Reſolutions are ſtrengthen'd in proportion to their Difficulties; they become Courageous by the Dangers they meet, and learn to make a reſolute Oppoſition by being attack'd with Violence. 'Tis part of our unhappineſs, that we cannot bear a long Calm, without being prejudiced by it; this generally leſs'ning our Fervor, and putting us in danger of letting Cuſtom take place of Reaſon and Faith; ſo that if the Soul be not awaken'd by the neceſſity of reſiſting Evil, it is ever ready to ſink, by the weight of its own Corruption, into the moſt dangerous of all Temptations, which is that of performing its greateſt Duties without Senſe or Life, but by Cuſtom; only whence, inſtead of being better'd by Peace, it would contract a Weakneſs, rendring it incapable of all Chriſtian Actions, upon the appearance of the leaſt difficulties to give it diſcouragement; it would be like a Soldier not accuſtom'd to War, who knowing not the force of his Enemy, is terrified upon the firſt Aſſault.

And then our Natural Pride inclining us to believe the good Diſpoſitions we find within us, to be of our own ſtock, and that we have them at command; a perfect Peace would inſenſibly ſtrengthen us in this good Opinion of our ſelves, make us forget our own Weakneſs, and the Dependance we have on God; we ſhould take all that for Natural, which we could do without Pain; without Contradiction, and without Combat. Wherefore the difficulty of Temptations is the way God has choſen, for the perfecting his Elect, for ſecuring them againſt the Dangers of their own Corruption, and preſerving them in the Diſpoſitions of a true Humility, by the Knowledge of their own Weakneſs, and of their neceſſary Dependance on God.

Hence it is, that even thoſe who have ſought God in the retirement of Deſarts, of Caves or Cells, have never been priviledg'd with any exemption from Temptations, but experienc'd them with greater violence, the nearer they have endeavor'd to approach to him; and in this have found the Effects of God's particular Mercy, not only in having their Virtue tried, and being taught to be Faithful in Temptation; but being thus more perfectly convinc'd of their own nothing, and

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of the nothing of all their Endeavors, if not aſſiſted by the Divine Grace, and oblig'd to be more diligent in all their Exerciſes, and more importune with Heaven for its help.

Now the Son of God himſelf, having been pleas'd to ſuffer himſelf to be Tempted, and led his beſt Servants by this way, for their improvement in all Good, and the encreaſe of their Crown; theſe Chriſtians ought not to be ſurpriz'd or dejected, in finding themſelves Aſſaulted too; but, upon due Reflection, conſider this, as one Task of this Life, neceſſary for the Trial of Virtue, for the Exerciſe of Patience, and making them the Soldiers of Chriſt; that tho' it has its Difficulties, yet it is what gives them great Opportunities of raiſing themſelves in the Favor of God, and of ſecuring their Eternal Lot: That therefore they ought not to be Diſquieted in what God has call'd them to, but offer themſelves to the trouble of all, with a Reſolution of fighting to the end, and begging God to ſtand by them, that they may never forſake his Cauſe.

Thirdly, That whatever Evil may be ſuggeſted to their Minds, it cannot be charg'd on them as their Sin, except they make it their own Act, by Approving, Yielding or Conſenting to it, after their

Reflection of its being Sinful; ſo that if upon obſerving the Evil, with which they are Aſſaulted, they immediately raiſe in their Minds a Diſlike of it, deſire to be deliver'd from it, and faithfully endeavor to remove it from them, it cannot be reputed their Sin: Nay, tho' it ſhould continue, making its Attempts upon them for Hours, or Days, or Months; yet does not this Obſtinacy in the Evil, draw them into any part of its Guilt, if their Conſtancy in defending themſelves, is anſwerable to the Malice with which they are Aſſaulted: For all this time they are wholly Paſſive in ſo many Attempts made againſt them; but it cannot be ſaid, they have made the Evil their own by any Act of theirs, ſince all they have done, has been in Contradiction to the Sin propos'd, in ſhewing their Abhorrence, and making Reſiſtance againſt it; which is not yielding to Sin, but doing the part of a Faithful Servant of God, in eſpouſing his Cauſe, and performing his Will, in fighting againſt his Enemies.

And 'tis the ſame, whatever the Evil be, that is propos'd, tho' the moſt Foul, Abominable or Impious, that the Devil's Malice can ſuggeſt: For what can be more deteſtable, than the Solicitation made to Chriſt, of Falling down and Worſhipping

Worshipping the Devil? And yet as this proposal was no blemish to the Sanctity of Christ, so neither can any others be to Christ's Servants, if by the Example of their Master, they give no Audience, but faithfully stand against them.

Fourthly, That tho' the Evil suggested may seize the Imagination, and all the Sensible Part of Man, nay, seemingly, the whole Soul, with a Sinful Delight; yet all this may be without the Guilt of wilful Sin, if the Will, upon a full Reflection of the Evil, and of the Danger in which it is, is presently Alarm'd, and industriously applies it self both to detest and make resistance against it. The Reason is; because there is such a Connection betwixt all the Faculties of the Soul, that there is nothing can, in a great degree, affect any one of them, but the rest must in some manner partake of it: So that if the Imagination or Sensitive Appetite be violently surpriz'd with Sensual Delight, this same must affect the Will too, as it is Nature, and a Part of the Whole; and yet the Will, as it is subject to Reason and Faith, may, at the same time, upon the Reflection of Reason, renounce all such Delight, and be troubled at the Delight with which it is affected. And then the Delight being

the Effect of Nature only, and the Trouble being the deliberate Act of the Judgment and Will, 'tis from this is to be taken the Meaſure of all that paſſes, and that Delight cannot be judg'd Wilful, which is thus oppos'd by the Will. This may be underſtood by the working of a contrary Paſſion: Let the Circumſtances be conſider'd of one, who is to be Tormented upon the Rack for his Faith, and upon the Moment of being brought to Execution; here the approaching Torments, by a lively Idea, may overwhelm the Imagination, and all the Senſitive Part, with Exceſſive Fear and Grief, and the Will, as it is a Part of Nature, may be effected with the ſame dejected Paſſions, and yet, as it is Directed by Faith, may at the ſame time Rejoice, in being thought worthy to ſuffer for the Name of Chriſt; and here, as the Natural Fear and Trouble is no blemiſh to the Martyr, ſince notwithſtanding this, he makes choice of Suffering, and ſubjects all his Natural Paſſions to the Judgment of Faith; ſo it may be in our Caſe, that all the Natural Delight, with which the whole Man is ſenſibly poſſeſs'd, may be no Prejudice to Chriſtian Purity, if the Will, as directed by Reaſon, expreſſes its

Abhorrence

Abhorrence in renouncing and ſtanding againſt all ſuch Suggeſtions.

Fifthly, That the whole interior Man may ſeem entirely overwhelm'd with unlawful Delight, and all appear with the looks of a Poſitive Conſent, and yet without the Guilt of Sin. This often happens to Chriſtians of a Solicitous, Fearful, or Melancholy Temper, who thro' Exceſſive Fear of Sin, are ſo diſturb'd upon finding themſelves ſurpriz'd with any unlawful Delight, that being unfit for making any Poſitive Reſiſtance, they preſently think all to be loſt, and are oppreſs'd with Grief and Horror for being ſo unhappy, as to have yielded to Sin. Thus all looks like Conſent to them, and they can eſteem themſelves nothing but miſerable Sinners; whereas in reality there is no more but the Effect of Immoderate Fear, which ſeeing danger, raſhly concludes all to be loſt, and with ill-timed Shrieks confounding all, makes no diſtinction betwixt Danger and Ruin: But as it is with frightful People, who Crying out Murther without being hurt, tho' thro' their own Apprehenſions, they may be left without Strength, and under the Signs of Death, have no more of it, but only the Terror, and otherwiſe are Alive and Sound; ſo it is often with

theſe Chriſtians; they lye down under the Terror of Sin, with the fright of it in their Imaginations, when the Guilt, as a Mortal ſtroke, has never approach'd them, and being Alive, have no Signs but of Death in them.

Now in looking back on themſelves, they cannot ſee any Reſiſtance they have made; and 'tis true, they have made none; becauſe their Exceſſive Fear confounding their Thoughts, render'd them incapable of ſtanding with any direct Oppoſition againſt the Enemy, or even of fleeing from him, becauſe looking on themſelves as already in his Hands, it ſeem'd too late to flee: And this is all the Effect of Ill Management, and a Spiritual Indiſcretion; it being the unavoidable Conſequence of Immoderate Fear. But however, tho' all appears thus with the Face of Deſpair and Horror to them, their Caſe is certainly much better than it appears; for God, who ſees there is not wanting in them a Sincere Deſire of Reſiſting the Evil, or Fleeing it, and that their too frightful Apprehenſion, is the only Occaſion of their not poſitively Executing their Deſires: Seeing again, that all the Anxiety, with which they are oppreſs'd, proceeds from no other Cauſe, but becauſe they think they have offended, he, in this

Exceſſive

Exceſſive Fear, and the ſucceeding Trouble, diſcovers ſuch a good Diſpoſition of Mind, that what they take for Conſent, he will regard as an interpretative Reſiſtance, ſuch as will clear them from all Wilful Guilt.

Sixthly, That therefore theſe ought not to make a Judgment of themſelves, from that Confuſion in which they then are, nor from thoſe frightful Ideas, which at that time overwhelm their Spirits, but from the General Diſpoſitions, in which they are antecedent to this Diſorder, and from thoſe, which ſucceed immediately upon it: And if they find, upon a Serious Examin, that they are generally afraid of Sin, and of the Occaſions of it, and when Aſſaulted with Temptations, or upon the firſt recovery of their Mind from the Confuſion occaſion'd by them, feel Sadneſs, Horror, and Averſion; they may take this as a ſufficient ſign of all their Evil Thoughts being involuntary, that they have been wholly Paſſive, and given no Conſent to them, altho' they are not ſenſible of having made any poſitive Reſiſtance againſt them. This is to be their Rule in all manner of Evil Thoughts, that perplex them, and by this they may frame the trueſt Judgment of their State, and be in a way of finding reſt for their Souls

Souls. For if upon the diſcovery of theſe Signs now mention'd, they would learn by degrees to contemn whatever Aſſaults are, or have been, made againſt them, and thus keep off all Sadneſs and Oppreſſion, which uſually follow them on this account, this would abate both their Melancholy and Fears, and bring them to a certain Firmneſs of Mind, ſuch as would not be ſo ſuſceptible of all impreſſions, but make them proof againſt them. For it being certain, that an exceſs of Sollicitude and Fear is the firſt Occaſion of this Diſturbance, and that as theſe Paſſions encreaſe, ſo muſt their Diſturbance too: There can be no hopes of Peace for them, but by uſing Means for leſſ'ning theſe Melancholy Fears; and this cannot be any other way without a Miracle, but by not yielding to them. And therefore, if after the frequent Advice, and even Commands of a Director, for contemning all thoſe Thoughts, that uſually moleſt them, and not to look on them as Sins, they, on any pretext whatever, yield to Grief and Diſquiet, and ſit down with a ſettled Judgment of their being moſt unhappy Sinners on this account, they may be aſſur'd, that in ſo doing, they gratifie their greateſt Enemy, in anſwering his Deſigns, they add to their own Misfortune,

fortune, and disappoint all his Endeavors, who is Solicitous for their deliverance: Whence,

Lastly, I put these Christians in mind, that being immoderately Solicitous and Fearful, they must not be surpriz'd at the number of Extravagant Thoughts, that assault them; for that there needs no more than an ill Habit of these Passions, for giving themselves this Disturbance; Fear being always of that Fruitful Temper, as ever to multiply and revive whatever it be, that it most of all apprehends, and is terrifying to it. So that as Persons, who are very much subject to be frighted, have their frightful Phancies rais'd by their own Fear, which mistaking every Shadow for a Ghost, makes them often Tremble, where there is nothing to hurt them; and when they desire most to be free from such Imaginations, and resolve against them, these very Desires and Resolutions are enough to recall all those Ideas into their Minds, which they are Solicitous to remove wholly from them: So it is with these Christians; their Apprehensive Temper opens their Minds to all those ill Thoughts, which they are most afraid of, and every Object, which otherwise would be Indifferent, becomes the Occasion of their Disturbance; their

Fear

Fear of Sin raiſes Sinful Imaginations; their Deſire of avoiding Sin, and Reſoluti againſt it, revive the very Ideas, which they wiſh never more to ſee; ſo that all the Faculties of the Soul ſeem bent upon Malice, when there is no ſooner any kind of reſtraint put upon them, but they all incline that way with greater violence, as if reſolv'd to act in contradiction to what is moſt earneſtly deſir'd of them.

This is the natural effect of a Solicitous and Fearful Conſtitution, and one principal Occaſion of their Diſturbance, who have Sincerity and Piety join'd with it: And therefore it ought to be their great Buſineſs, to take Advice with an Experienc'd Director, and be exact in following it, tho' in Contradiction to their own Apprehenſions, that ſo they may not indiſcreetly contribute to their own Misfortune. And in the mean time, till they can gain ground upon it, they muſt not wonder at the multiplicity and importunity of Evil Thoughts, that Diſquiet them, ſince theſe are as natural as the conflux of Humors to the weakeſt Part; they muſt not judge themſelves by them, becauſe they are Paſſive in them, they muſt not think they conſent, upon perceiving no poſitive Reſiſtance, becauſe their Confuſi-

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on makes them unfit for Action; they must not grieve at Assaults they suffer, because if this be indulg'd, it prepares them for greater Troubles. All they can do, is Sincerely to lay open the State of their Souls, and be exact in following Direction, and thus only, with the Divine Assistance, are they to hope for Remedy.

Q. *What is the Rule Christians are to observe in time of Temptation?*

A. The general Obligation, is to strive to deliver themselves from them in the best manner they are able: Sometimes this may be done by positive resistance, or directly protesting against them; sometimes by raising the Heart immediately to God, and seeking Refuge in the Wounds of Christ Crucified; sometimes by turning the Thoughts to Business, or Indifferent Objects; sometimes by contemning or passing them by with a kind of Neglect or Scorn; sometimes by seeming not to have seen them: And this latter way of Dissimulation or Contempt may be most proper for those, of whom we here speak; because 'tis that, which gives the least Disturbance; for since their Misfortune is occasion'd by immoderate Solicitude, the less notice they take of them, is the better; and making a more positive Resistance, is the way to discom-

pose

poſe themſelves, and draw on the Evil more upon them. They ſhould endeavor to have always this Judgment well ſettled in them; that the worſt of Temptations are only the Attempts of the Devil's Malice, or their own Corrupt Nature, from which they can receive no Prejudice, but with their own Conſent. And why then ſhould they be troubled or diſturb'd at them? No; let them not value ſuch Attempts, but contemn them; and they may be aſſur'd, that as Contempt is far from being Conſent, ſo they are far from being Injur'd by them, ſince they thus fall like Arrows thrown againſt a Rock, which is not at all damag'd by the Malice of ſuch Endeavors.

Q. *But what if Evil Thoughts are in their Minds, and they, for ſome time, do not Reflect upon the Evil of them?*

A. They cannot be accounted theirs, but by yielding to them, after Reflection; and therefore, as for all the time antecedent to this, they muſt be look'd on as the Imaginations of a Perſon in a Dream, when having them not ſubject to him, he cannot be accountable for what then paſſes in him; and therefore, if upon the firſt obſerving them, they preſently undertake to remove them, there can be no danger of Wilful Sin. 'Tis true, it is a very

very great ſign of an Interior Indiſpoſition, for a Chriſtian to have his Mind, for any time, poſſeſs'd with theſe Thoughts, without his Reflecting on them: For were there a true Fear of Sin in his Heart, an earneſt Solicitude for Salvation, a fervent Zeal for God's Honor, the firſt approach of what is Criminal, would preſently give him the Alarm, and make him Induſtrious in ſtanding on his Defence. Were God to Chriſtians their Only Good, the Fear of loſing him would make them Jealous of every thing that brings Danger with it. But however, being ſenſible of the ſtreightneſs of Human Spirit, and that many, thro' the Indiſpoſition of an unactive Temper, are not eaſily preſent with themſelves, ſo as to have the Command always of their own Thoughts, I will not charge this want of Reflection tóo poſitively, but only ſo, as to deſire thoſe, who are ſubject to it, to examin themſelves and ſee, whether this want of Senſe proceeds not from an indifferency or want of Concern in the great Affair of their Soul, and whether, upon this account, tho' they conſent not to Evil after Reflection, they may not accuſe themſelves of a great Neglect, in not Reflecting ſooner.

I fear this may be the Caſe of many who

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lye Charm'd, as it were, under the Amuſements of Idle Thoughts, and tho' by certain Glimpſes of Light, they ſee enough to be ſenſible of the Evil that is hovering about them, yet raiſe not up the Spirits, nor by any vigorous Attempt ſtrive to deliver themſelves from thoſe dangerous Circumſtances: For in theſe certainly there is a ſort of Stupidity, which betrays either an Affection to Sin, or at leaſt, that there is not that Averſion to it, as ought to be. Tell them of a Viper or Toad creeping to them, tell them of Fire in the Neighborhood, or of a Meſſenger at the Door coming to Seize them, and tho' oppreſs'd with the Heavineſs of Sleep, yet the leaſt Intimation fully awakens them, and their whole Thoughts are taken up in conſidering how to Eſcape. And why this Solicitude here? Becauſe they have a true Horror of the Evil, that threatens, and their Induſtry in ſecuring themſelves is proportion'd to their Averſion to it. And why then are they ſo dull and unactive in the other Caſe, when they have a like Senſe of the Miſchief hanging about them? Is it not becauſe the Intereſt of Eternity has not that weight upon them, as their Temporal Concerns, and therefore it is they can ſee Danger upon them, without ſtirring a Hand for their Security?

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Let them but see into the Cause of this great Solicitude on one side, and stupid Dulness on the other, and they will find a Neglect, if not Contempt, of Eternity to lye at the Root.

Q. *What therefore ought these to do?*

A. These ought to Remedy the Cause of their Evil, by laboring to imprint in their Minds a greater Sense of Eternity; and this not being one Days Work, they are to take Advice, of what Method may be most proper for changing the whole Course of their Lives, so to remove by degrees their ill Habits, and prepare their Souls for better. They are to consider their Company, the usual Employments of their Time, *&c.* and observing how far they contribute to their own Indisposition, cut off all the voluntary Occasions of it. They are to see, how far they Neglect those Exercises of Devotion, and Means of Grace, appointed by God for their help, letting Sloth or false Pretexts of Business be their hindrance in this Affair, which cannot be neglected, but with hazard of Eternity; and then take Resolutions for a greater Fidelity. This is the Way God has ordain'd for bringing their Souls into a better Disposition, and if they do not Sincerely put themselves into it, it is not to be wonder'd, if they

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lie Secure amidſt their Enemies, and play with Temptations, when they ſhould be fighting againſt them. For as for that active and lively Spirit, by which Chriſtians are to ſtand againſt the Dangers of Sin, it is the Effect of a Particular Grace, ſuch as they can never expect, who go on with the Spirit of Indifferency, Cold and Careleſs, and take no Pains for obtaining it.

Q. *Well, but if Chriſtians take pains in reſiſting every Evil, that aſſaults them, and yet obſerve their Inclinations all bending towards Evil; have not they Reaſon to ſuſpect themſelves of Inſincerity, and fear their Wounds to be only cover'd over with a falſe Skin, while they ſee Evil to be their own Natural Act, and all they can call Virtue to be forc'd and Artificial?*

A. It can be no otherwiſe in this Mortal State; for ſince Corruption and Concupiſcence cannot be rooted out, theſe will ever act according to their Nature, and incline us to Evil, and there is no Remedy againſt feeling theſe Inclinations, but only that laſt Change, when by the Power of God, this Mortal Body ſhall put on Immortality, and this Corruptible put on Incorruption. In the mean time, it is an unhappy Inheritance entail'd on all the Children of *Adam*, while in the Body, to be

be sensible of this bent of Nature towards Evil, and this both in the Just and Unjust: You see, how S. *Paul* complains of it in his Epistle to the *Romans*, c. 7. I see another Law in my Members, resisting the Law of my Mind, and Captivating me in the Law of Sin. Unhappy Man, who will deliver me from the Body of this Death? In my Mind, I serve the Law of God; but in my Flesh, the Law of Sin. This then being the Condition of all Mankind, no Christian has Reason to wonder, if he finds in himself a Contradiction to all Virtues, that his Faith is oppos'd, that Nature carries him against all Duties; for this is nothing, but the Law in the Members resisting the Law of the Mind: 'Tis that which gives him matter of Exercise as long as he lives, and obliges him to fight; but the Feeling it will never be charg'd upon him, as his Sin, except by his Will, he concurs with it: If therefore he Obeys not Concupiscence, as S. *Paul* speaks, if Sin reigns not in his Mortal Body, if he perfects not the Desires of the Flesh, if he mortifies his Members upon Earth, if he renounces Impiety and worldly Desires, and does this in Obedience to the Will of God, this is living by the Spirit, while he feels the Corruption of the Flesh, and is the

Practice

Practice of Virtue proper to this Mort
State. And tho' this be a Force upon Na
ture, yet this is ſo far from Inſincerity, o
being any leſs'ning to what he does, that i
makes all more valuable in the Sight o
God, ſince not being able to come to him
in Peace, he fights his way to him, by doing
Violence to Nature, and forcing all tha
Corruption, which is within him, to bend
to the Law of God. Whence Pious Chri
ſtians may ſee, how little Reaſon the
have to be diſturb'd at the many Inclinati
ons and ſtrong Impulſes they feel to wha
is Sinful, ſince whatever their Violence be,
whatever Horror or Impiety they carry
with them, they can be no Prejudice to true
Virtue, if they yield not them, but ha
ving the Command of their own Wills, are
ever Induſtrious to renounce their Sug
geſtions, and let the Law of God Rule in
their Hearts. For in ſo doing, all theſe
can be only reputed ſo many Trials o
their Fidelity, and by being reſolutely op
pos'd, will be the encreaſe of their Crown,
in the Recompence of many Bleſſings pro
portion'd to their Labors. Bleſſed is the
Man, that ſuffers Temptation, for when
he has been tried, he ſhall receive a
Crown of Life, which God has promis'd
to thoſe that love him.

The Heads of theſe Inſtructions are
First,

First, That those Christians, who live in a State of Sin or Idleness, are to be accountable not only for their Sins, but for all the Temptations, which they wilfully draw upon themselves, and tho' they are bound to resist Temptations, yet they cannot be Sincere in this, except they endeavor to Change the Method of their Lives.

Secondly, That to Pious Christians Temptations are the Trial of their Fidelity; and tho' very troublesom, yet they give Opportunity of great Improvement in Virtue, and are the Exercise of God's most Faithful Servants.

Thirdly, That it is an Argument of some Indisposition in the Soul, to have the Mind busied for any time with Evil Thoughts, without observing or making a Reflection on them.

Fourthly, That generally the Soul contracts no wilful Guilt from Temptations, except after Reflection made upon them, the Will concurrs with them, either by Neglecting, Approving or Consenting to them.

Fifthly, That if the Temptations continue with repeated Assaults for whole Days, Weeks or Months, and are in themselves most Abominable, Foul or Impious, yet the Soul receives no Prejudice from

from them, if it perseveres in its diffi
of them, in sincerely desiring to be de
liver'd from them, and faithfully makin
resistance against them; for that in so do
ing, it makes Advantage of the Oppositi
on.

Sixthly, That Apprehensive, Fearfu
and Melancholy Christians, may seem t
themselves wholly possess'd with Sinfu
Delight, and overwhelm'd by Temptations
that Assault them, and yet not be Guilty o
of Sin, tho' they think, they have po
sitively Consented to it.

Seventhly, That tho' they can perceiv
no positive Resistance against the Evi
presented, yet this being occasion'd by
Immoderate Solicitude and Fear; there
is something Equivalent to it in that Trou
ble and Anxiety, which seizes them up
on the approach of the Temptation, and
upon the Apprehension of having Con
sented to it.

Eighthly, That whatever they think o
themselves, whilst under that Confusion
they ought to submit the Judgment of their
Case to their Director, and strictly follow
his Advice, as to all belonging to the
Government of their Souls, especially as to
Confession, and going to the H. Commu
nion, and let Hopes be proportion'd by
his Judgment, and not by their own Fears.

Ninthly,

Ninthly, That feeling Sadness and trouble in Time of Temptation, or immediately upon the first recovery of the Spirits from that Confusion into which they are cast by it, is a Sign of no Consent being given to it, tho' they can discover no positive Resistance made against it.

Lastly, That fleeing Temptation, contemning it, or not seeming to have seen it, is the readiest way for these to deliver themselves from it, and gain Peace for their Souls, and much safer than directly Opposing it.

CHAP. V.

Instructions for Cold, Tepid or Lukewarm Christians.

HAving already spoke to the Case of those Christians, who sincerely desiring to serve God, and perform all Duties with Fidelity, are yet depriv'd of all Sense and Comfort in what they do; I now turn to those, who are likewise without Sense or Comfort in whatever belongs to God; and this being occasion'd thro' their own Neglect and want of Applicati-

on, are therefore call'd Tepid or Luke-warm Christians; and in what is here said to these, the former are by no means concern'd, however positive they may be, in taking it for their Case.

By Tepid Christians, I mean those described by S. *Bernard*, who pray without Attention, speak without Caution, read without Edifying, who are but little aw'd by the fear of Hell, scarce restrain'd by Modesty, scarce govern'd by Reason, and but little observant of Discipline: I mean those, who having their Hearts taken up with the World, either as to its Business or Follies; are so much concern'd in this, that they have no Solicitude for their Eternal Good, not so, as wholly to lay by those Exercises, that may be serviceable to it, but to perform all with a kind of Indifferency, so that they are not willing to omit, nor yet careful enough to do, what God requires of them: I mean those, who having times for Private Prayer, easily admit of all Kinds of Hindrances to divert them from it; who assemble in Public, when oblig'd, but with so little Sense of their Duty, as rather to give Scandal by their Irreverence, than Edifie by an Exemplar Behavior; who go to the Sacraments but seldom, and then more in compli-

ance

ance with Custom, or because 'tis expected from them, than for the obtaining Grace, and hence are wanting both in preparing and in satisfying the Obligations of true Repentance: Who are Slothful in reading or hearing what is for their Instruction, are presently surfeited with what is good, and find many hinderances either wholly to excuse them, or to come but late to them: Who avoid, or unwillingly see those, who are desirous to inform them of their Ill Ways, and take the most Charitable Reproof with Contempt or Dislike: Who seldom look into themselves, or make such hasty Examens, as to omit Contrition, and the necessary Considerations and Resolutions for Amendment: Who are with Eagerness bent on all Vain and Idle Entertainments, tho' not running into the Vice of them; who have little care in observing Discipline in themselves or Family, and expose all to disorder for pleasing themselves: Who are forward in Reproving and Censuring others, but careless of those, who are under their Charge: Finally, who have a great Esteem for whatever is Idle and Unprofitable, and a general Neglect for all that belongs to Duty and Religion.

These are some of the Characters of Tepid Christians, which tho' not coming

up to that degree of Foulneſs, at to give any great Scandal to the World, are however the Effect of a great Indiſpoſition in the Soul, and not leſs difficult in its Cure, than the moſt Scandalous of Vices. Nay, S. *Gregory* ſeems to have greater Hopes of the Vicious Chriſtian, than of the Tepid. For he that yet lives in Sin, ſays he is not without hopes of being Converted; but as for him, who after his Converſion grows Lukewarm, he gives not that hopes, which may be had of the Sinner. And it was the Obſervation of *Caſſianus*; We have often ſeen, ſays he, Carnal Chriſtians and Pagans become Eminent in Piety; but this we have never ſeen in Tepid Chriſtians. And truly all the Fathers are ſo unanimous in the ſame almoſt deſpairing Sentiments, that if they are not enough to terrifie thoſe, who are in theſe unhappy Circumſtances, they are almoſt enough to diſcourage me from my deſign of giving Inſtructions to them, and leave me, at leaſt, but with little Hopes of doing good in what I propoſe.

To make way then for what I intend, it muſt be here declar'd, that the Severity of the Fathers in this Point, is not to cut theſe Chriſtians off from the Hopes of finding Mercy, if they ſincerely ſeek it; for

for that God cannot deny this to any that are truly Converted to him; and he that opens the Arms of a Loving Father to the Prodigal Returning, has the same Arms of Mercy for these too, if they return; but what the Fathers say, is to to make them Sensible of the danger, in which they are, and of the great difficulties of their Amendment, and that they may not live on flattering themselves with the false Hopes of being in the Way to Salvation, while they are truly in a Way, which can admit of no such Hopes, but by forsaking it. For this is the Point, in which the notorious Sinner has the Advantage of them, who knows, he can have no place for Hope, as long as he continues in that unhappy State, but is under the necessity of a Change; and these go on blindly, joining Hope with a State, that will not bear it; and hence being not convinc'd of the necessity of a Change, live on without intending or endeavoring it, and therefore come at length to Die unhappily.

The first Instruction therefore for these, is to put them in Mind of their State being not only dangerous, but such as is incapable of Salvation; and if they take not pains to overcome their ill Habit, and Work their Souls into a better Disposi-

tion, all their expectation will be Vain. Whence all those have Reason to suspect themselves, who making an Examen, discover a great part of those ill Symptoms above-mention'd, and this not only upon some accident of Misfortune or Melancholy, but in a continued practice of them, without any great Concern at the Disorder, or any Solicitude for the removal of it; for however they are neither subject to the Common Vices of the World, nor yet lay aside the Common Duties of a Christian; yet while they see the Marks of a Tepid Soul, they have Reason to fear themselves being under God's Displeasure, and that their Hopes of Salvation, is nothing but Delusion. And tho' I cannot tell in particular, who these are, yet when I observe the Common Method of the World, and see, what a general Neglect there is in the Public Worship of God, that the notorious Levity and Irreverence in some, and the Dulness in others is an Argument of great numbers being brought thither by Formality or Custom; how great is the Solicitude of most Christians in gratifying themselves, and how indifferent they are as to what belongs to God; how little is the Care in observing Disciplin; how the Means of Grace are either neglected or abus'd; how the

Hearts

Hearts of Men are taken up with the Great and Pleasing Things of this World, and how Weak and Barren are the Impressions of the Eternal Goods, I have Reason to fear, that notwithstanding the throng of Public Assemblies, and the frequent Exercises of Devotion in Private, their number is very great, who have Reason to be Jealous of their's being the State, which is describ'd by the Fathers as Dangerous, if not Desperate, and that for the entertaining Solid Hopes of Salvation, there's a Necessity of a Change.

Secondly, That for the effecting this Change, 'tis not enough to consider their particular Failings, and make an Acknowledgment of them to the Pastors of God's Church; but there's a necessity of undertaking such a Method, as may alter the whole Constitution and Frame of their Souls. And here's their difficulty, that their Cure depends on doing that, to which they have the greatest dislike, whilst those very Exercises, in which under God, is their only help, and are to be done with Life, are the only things, in which they want Life, and therefore have no Encouragement to undertake or pursue them with any tolerable Constancy. A Faith of the Goods to come is to push them on, and this Faith is almost Dead:

The Hopes of Eternal Happineſs is to give them Perſeverance, and this Hope is without ſtrength: The Love of God is to carry them with Reſolution thro' all Difficulties, both of Nature, the World, and the Devil, and they have no Senſe of what this Love is, but are wholly Strangers to it. What therefore muſt they do? They muſt put themſelves under the Conduct of ſome Charitable Director, and when he has truly conſider'd their Caſe, reſolve with Conſtancy to follow his Advice. They muſt have Times appointed for Praying, Reading, and for all other Duties; they muſt cut off with all poſſible Care their uſual Hindrances; they muſt renounce, by degrees (tho' it may be better done at once) both their Company and Divertiſements, thoſe, I mean, which are the general Occaſions of that Diſſipation of Mind, to which they are ſubject: They muſt contrive ſome Employment, which may deliver them from the dangers of Idleneſs; and if worldly Buſineſs has, with too much Eagerneſs, poſſeſs'd their Minds, they muſt do Violence to themſelves, and to their worldly Intereſt, in quitting ſome part, and exchange it for a more profitable Entertainment of the Soul; and if this cannot be, endeavor, at leaſt, to ſanctifie their Labors, by ſeaſoning

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ing them with frequent Thoughts of God, and undertaking them upon better Motives, than they have hitherto done.

By these and other like ways, these Christians must endeavor to quicken in their Souls a new Spirit; and tho' it may look to them, for some time, labor in vain, thro' the want of Fervor and Sense in what they do, yet they must not be discourag'd, but go on still, remembering, that great Changes are to have great Preparations; and Confiding in him, who has promis'd, that he that seeks, shall find; it being most certain, if this be undertaking with Sincerity, and carried on with Fidelity, God cannot be wanting to his Promise, and that he will be at length found by as many as seek him thus, tho' for the encrease of their Humility, and rend'ring them more Importune, he may delay his approaching to them.

Now as for the time they are to persevere in this Method, they must not expect this to be determin'd; but if that be necessary, which they seek, they must seek, till they find, and ask, till they obtain; their whole Life is granted them, for the working out their Salvation; and if they labor for this all their Lives, 'tis no more, than what answers the End of their Creation, and will be abundantly recom-

penc'd in the happy Fruit of their Labors. There may be however this Encouragement in their undertaking, that what they begin with great Reluctance, and carry on with Uneasiness, may meet with many Comforts at length to help them on: For if once God is so favorable, as to give them a Sense of their Duty, this will Change the Taste of their Soul, and give a Relish to all they do; so that tho' their Exercises be the same, they will not be the same to them, but their Reluctance will be succeeded with Delight, and what was at first a Force, will become their Choice; so far, at least, as to be satisfied in doing what their Duty prescribes, and may contribute to their Eternal Happiness.

And this is the Point they are chiefly to propose, as the immediate End of what they undertake, for since there can be no Salvation expected, but what must be the Effect of God's own Gifts, such as he is pleas'd to bestow on Man for this End, the Principal of which are Faith, Hope and Charity: A Christian must remember that he is not in the way to Salvation, except he comes to Work by these Principles, so that the main Body of his Actions is directed by their influence. Till these come therefore to be in his Soul like

fruitful

fruitful Seed; till the Works of Faith, Hope, and Charity, are manifest to him, and appear in his Life; till by their impressions the Possession of God and Eternal Life becomes valuable, and of all other Goods the most desireable; till by their Power he can undertake to overcome the World and himself; till he can resolutely withdraw from the ways of Corruption, that lead to Sin, and with Constancy apply himself to those Exercises of Prayer and Mortification, which are the Means of Grace; till he can bring himself to this Holy Disposition, he may be assur'd, he has only the Name and Profession, but not the Life of a Christian; and must be so far from remitting his Endeavors, that he must conclude, he has yet done nothing; because 'tis the Spirit of God alone can bring him to God, and in this consists the Life of the Spirit. If therefore his whole Solicitude be confin'd to Earth; and all that is within him, pays continual Homage to the Inclinations of Corrupt Nature, in seeking all that gratifies, and fleeing whatever is the Object of their dislike; what is there in this, but the Spirit of the World? And can it be hop'd that this Spirit will ever lead to God? What is there in this, that is the Work of Faith, since the great Business is

carried

carried by Sense and Inclination, and little besides some bare Formalities, done in making Provision for that Life, which Faith teaches?

Now since this is the unhappy Temper of Lukewarm Christians, in having Life for what belongs to Nature, and the World, and so little Sense of what belongs to God, that they may be truly said to be without Life, they may in this see how far they are from the Life of a Christian, and how long a way they have to go, before they come to it; and that if, notwithstanding all the Difficulties, they take not all the Pains necessary for going over it; and Working an entire Change in themselves, they remain in a State, which the H. Scripture and Fathers declare to be Desperate; and that Light of Faith, which here distinguish'd them from Unbelievers, will only serve to make their Judgment more Terrible.

Here are not many Instructions for this Point, but these are the Principal; for since the great Misfortune of the Christians, is the false perswasion of their being in a way, tho' not the best, yet such as may secure them against an Eternal Miscarriage; their help must begin from the Conviction of this being a Delusion, and that, without a Change, their

Hope

Hope can be no more, than of the most Scandalous Offender. If they were sensible of this, then, upon enquiry, they might be here satisfied, what they have to do; and being thus put upon those Exercises which are the most effectual Restoratives of Life, they have in this the Method of their Cure.

Q. *This is only in general; have you nothing in particular to prescribe?*

A. This must be left to the Director's Care, with regard to every one's Circumstances. I can here come to no more Particulars, than to propose to them, First, The necessity of firmly resolving upon a new Method, and earnestly imploring the Divine Grace to make them Faithful to what they undertake, and carry them thro' all Discouragements and Difficulties. 2dly, To think upon making a General Confession, and preparing, in the best manner they can, for receiving the H. Eucharist: And then conclude upon a Method of Reading, Praying, and Recollection, as may be practicable in their Circumstances. 3dly, To renew their good Purposes on all Solemn Festivals; and once a Year, as in *Lent*, or Holy Week, more in patiticular; preparing then also for a Yearly Confession. This renewing of the Spirit, is advis'd by S. *Francis Sales*,

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as convenient for all, once every Year, and was practis'd by the Primitive Saints every Day. Lastly, If Circumstances will permit, to take some Days for Retirement, where by the Advice of a Director, being separated from usual Distractions, they may wholly apply their Thoughts to consider the true State of their Souls, and giving some Hours to Reading and Meditating upon the Passion of Christ, the Trials and Sufferings of his Servants, upon the End of our Creation, the Benefits of God, and the Abuses of them, the Effects of Sin, the Shortness of Life, Certainty of Death, and Everlasting Misery of Sinners. This is the Exercise, which is most likely to remove the Habitual Heaviness from their Souls, and reach them to walk in the Way of God's Commandments with Delight. But as for their usual way of Confessing, without considering, what their Evil is, and what must be their Remedy, 'tis the Abuse of a Sacrament, and adds to their Sins.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Instructions for Christians of a Solicitous and Worldly Spirit.

'TIS a Common Duty of all Christians, to perform the Obligations of their State with Care and Fidelity; so that of whatever Degree or Condition a Christian be, he is bound first to consider, what are the Duties annex'd to his State; and then see, he be not wanting in any of them, thro' Sloth or Neglect; for that all such Neglect will be Charg'd upon him as an Injustice, and he must be answerable for it to Almighty God.

But this Care, to be Just, must be Rational, and not exceed those bounds, which God has prescrib'd; and therefore since he has ordain'd, that whatever is done in this World, should be serviceable to the next, to which it is Subordinate; hence it follows, that if a Christian be bent with so much Eagerness upon the Affairs he has in this World, as either wholly to take off his Concern for the next, or be the occasion of generally neglecting it, such Eagerness is not Rational, and therefore not

not Just, and is not to be call'd Care, but an Immoderate and Sinful Solicitude. Whence it appears, the Just Fidelity, with which all Temporal Duties are to be perform'd, is seated, like all other Virtues, betwixt Two Extremes, and Christians may offend against it, either by not coming up to it, thro' Neglect, or by going beyond it, thro' Excess of Solicitude. Now tho' the number of Careless Christians may be much the greater, who look not into the Obligations of their State, or perform them with such Indifferency, that 'tis plain, their Concern is only to satisfie the Eyes of Men, but not to answer their Duty to Justice, which God has laid upon them, yet their number is very great too, who have their Hearts so wholly possess'd with worldly Business, that their Solicitude in this stifles so much their Concern for Eternity, that it may be truly said, They are Men of this World, and forget they were Created for a better.

Now in this matter are to be distinguish'd two Ranks of Christians; the one of those, whose Solicitude is occasion'd by excess of Business, which gives little Liberty to their Thoughts, for considering and providing for Eternity: The other of those, whose Constitution is so Worldly, that whatever

whatever their Buſineſs be, whether little or great, their whole Soul is taken up in it; and are ſo bent on their Ordinary and and Home Affairs, many of which are of themſelves Indifferent, that their Concern in theſe takes off their Concern for Eternity, ſo that they can ſcarce find time for Prayer; and whenever they perform it, it is with ſuch a Crowd of other Thoughts, that they ſcarce know what they do, and are even then rather working and contriving for this World, than Praying for their Eſtabliſhment in a better. To both theſe we muſt ſay ſomething.

And as to the former ſort of Chriſtians, it cannot be expected, that any can Live ſo exempt from Solicitude in this World, but that in Buſineſs of great Concern, in time of ſurprizing Misfortunes, Diſappointments, and Common Afflictions of this Life, their Minds will be ſubject to that Diſtraction and Confuſion, as will prove a hindrance to all Exerciſes of Devotion. This cannot be altogether prevented, becauſe of the Narrowneſs of Human Spirit, which being ſeiz'd violently with any one thing, cannot apply it ſelf with freedom to any other. Tho' there be likewiſe great difference in this; becauſe thoſe, who are fully convinc'd of

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the Uncertainty and Vanity of all that
Sublunary, or belongs to Earth, and ha
concluded their only Happineſs to be
the Poſſeſſion of God, are not ſo eaſily ſu
priz'd at Diſappointments, nor ſo wholl
ſeiz'd with Trouble, as others, who hav
not yet learnt this Leſſon ſo well, but ar
Admirers, and Fond of the World. B
whatever this difference be, they are
under the ſame Obligation of endeavo
ing to Calm their Spirits with all poſſibl
ſpeed, ſince in ſuch diſturbance they ar
not capable of performing any Chriſtia
Duty well, as it ought to be.

But if the Caſe be ſo, that the Solicitud
of Chriſtians be not Accidental, but Habit
al; that is, be occaſion'd by an almoſt perp
tual Hurry of Affairs, here the Obligation
very different from thoſe above-mention
For then they are under a neceſſity of qu
ting ſome part of their uſual Buſineſs, or el
of gaining ſuch a command of themſelv
that they can keep their Minds compos
for the quiet performance of ſuch Duti
as belong to God, and likewiſe find l
ſure for the Diſcharge of this Obligatio
The Reaſon is, becauſe all Chriſtians
by their Profeſſion, are bound to anſw
the End for which they were Create
in the conſtant performance of the H
mage due to God, and making Proviſ
wh

while they are in this World, for an Eternal well-being in the next: And whatever proves, in fact, inconsistent with this general Duty, becomes, upon this, unlawful, and is inconsistent with their being truly Christians. And here there is no consideration to be had of their Profession or Business being Lawful; for however Lawful and Just it may be in it self; yet if it puts them out of a Condition of Serving God, and Saving their Souls, it is, by this render'd Unlawful to them. Because there is an evident Injustice in the Omission of that, which, before all things, they are bound to seek, and for the gaining of which, they were placed in this World, and had a Being given them.

This is positively thus determin'd by Christ himself, in the Parable of the Persons invited to the Supper prepar'd for them, who excusing themselves from coming, upon the account of Trying Oxen, Seeing a Farm, and the Obligations of a Married Life, were all excluded with this absolute Sentence, *Not one of these Men shall taste my Supper.* Where 'tis obvious to a passing Eye, that there was no Unlawfulness in the Business, that was made the Subject of their Excuse; and yet such Business being the occasion of their not complying with the Invitation, this was

enough

enough to draw the Sentence of a p
petual Exclusion upon them. And t
it is in all Cases, whatever is the hindran
in that great Duty, for which we we
Born, of Seeking first the Kingdom
God; all Duties, however otherwi
strictly en[illegible]n'd, that happen to inte
fere with t[illegible], are no longer Duties, b
must be dispenc'd with by the Authori
of the Supreme Law-giver, who allow
only one Law to be Indispensible, an
will have all others yield to this. Ho
strictly are Children commanded to Hon
and Obey their Parents? And yet if Obe
ing Parents proves a hindrance, such
puts Children out of the way of Salvatio
they are dispenc'd in this Duty, and oblig
to leave Father and Mother; for th
otherwise they cannot be Christ's Disciple
How great is the Tie of the Conjug
State? And yet this must give way to th
greater Duty of providing for Eternity;
that, if thro' any unhappy Circumstance
the Fidelity otherwise due to this State
becomes an Impediment to Salvation
the Obligation is upon this made void
and God is not to be lost for Man.

Now if it be thus in regard of the
great Duties, such as are enjoin'd b
God himself, that they must all yield t
the great Concern of Eternity, as often a
they

hey become inconſiſtent with it; what uſt be thought of all other Buſineſs, hich is not any part of a Chriſtian's Du-y, but either indiſcreetly undertaken, or nly to ſatisfie the Inelinations of a Greedy, Worldly, or Ambitious Spirit? Can it e made a queſtion, whether ſuch Buſi-neſs is to be interrupted or leſſen'd, when he Chriſtian, thro' his exceſſive applicati-n to it, has no leiſure to perform ſuch Duties, as are neceſſary for his Eternal Happineſs, and when the Solicitude in Worldly Affairs ſo takes up his Thoughts, hat he is little concern'd for any other World, but this?

Q. *But if the Buſineſs be lawful, cannot the one be done, and the other not omitted?*

A. If Chriſtians can contrive to do this, have no Exceptions againſt them: And here is no queſtion, it may be ſo, if all things are done with Moderation: But hey, who are ſenſible, how great a Work Salvation is, how great an Appli-cation of the Mind is neceſſary, both for performing Duties, and overcoming Dan-gers; and on the other ſide, conſider the ſtreightneſs of all Human Faculties, which if bent with immoderate Eagerneſs one way, are not capable of giving due Atten-tion, any other way, muſt from this Proſpect ſee, that if the Solicitude in

Worldly

Worldly Business be very great, and a
mitting very little intermissions, th
Circumstances render the State of a Chr
stian very difficult and dangerous, a
will be the frequent occasion of excus
them from the compliance with ma
Duties, such as are necessary for the su
sistance of the Soul in Her Spiritual Li
and making Her advance towards Heav
However, if there be any, who have suc
large Souls, and are bless'd with that Co
posure and Evenness of Temper, th
their Multiplicity of Affairs destroys n
their Concern for Eternity, nor is the
hindrance in the just discharge of Chr
stian Duties, if there be any such, I s
let them go on, I lay no Scruples in th
way. But I fear, these are but few, a
that the greatest number of Men, w
are thus deeply engag'd in the Wor
must own, they are by this Solicitude re
der'd uncapable of satisfying their great
Duties, and that Heaven is at a stand w
them, while they have this weight
Earth upon them; and therefore are u
der a necessity of lessening this Burthe
if they think seriously of gaining He
ven.

Q. *But if their Business be necessary*
the Subsistance of themselves or Family, w
can they do?

A. The

A. There is no Buſineſs neceſſary for this End, but what may become truly Chriſtian, by being undertaken as an Act of Juſtice, to ſatisfie that Duty they owe their Family, and thus may be helpful to Eternity. And ſo Providence has order'd it, that whatever Labor is neceſſary for Life, may be thus ſanctified; ſince all Labor of the Hands gives Liberty to the Mind for conſidering upon Eternity, and neceſſarily admits of ſuch intermiſſions, as gives thoſe concern'd, ſufficient Opportunities of performing the Duties of the Soul, if they are but careful to make uſe of them. And for ſuch other Profeſſions, where the Mind is more engag'd, if they carry on their Buſineſs no farther than Neceſſity of Life or Common Decency requires, this will be no ſtop to the Affairs of the Soul, becauſe the Mind or Time will not be ſo taken up, but there may be ſtill Liberty for all Duties. And 'tis ſeldom, that Worldly Buſineſs becomes Fatal to to the Soul, but when Chriſtians quite outgoing all bounds of Nature and Reaſon, are overcome by ſome Paſſion or other, and bend all the Faculties of their Souls upon ſatisfying their Ambition, their Prodigality, the Deſire of appearing Great, or their Covetous Humor: For when Paſſion comes to govern, then the Mind

Mind is no longer regulated by Principl
of Reaſon, and Faith, but theſe bei
ſtifled, Moderation and Order are
more reſpected, but all muſt be carri
on according to the violence of Inclina
on; and if the Stock can but be encreas
'tis not conſider'd, how this ſtands wi
the Intereſt of the Soul; but this, like
poor, inconſiderable thing, muſt ſhift
well as it can. This it the Solicitud
that Wars againſt Heaven, and puts th
Chriſtian quite out of his way, ſo that
long as he lives thus Hurried on by Paſſio
tho' he be free from all other Vice, th
alone is enough to exclude him fro
the Eternal Banquet, by engaging h
Heart to Earth, and taking him off fro
thoſe Duties, which are neceſſary Prepar
tions for a better Life. Wherefore
think all theſe have Reaſon to be very a
prehenſive of their Condition in rega
of Eternity, and are bound to conſi
how far they are oblig'd to renounce the
Employments, or how to manage the
without renouncing Chriſtianity.

As for the other ſort of Chriſtian
who, whether in great or little Affair
perform all with that Solicitude, that the
ſcarce know, what
is, I muſt confeſs, their Conſtitution
unhappy, and very much indiſpoſes the

for the Practice of a Chriſtian Life. The firſt Inſtruction for theſe, is to put them upon conſidering the Difficulties and Dangers of their State: They are to reflect, that whatever their Buſineſs be in this Life, they have ſtill a much greater Buſineſs on their Hands, even that for which they were Born, of preparing their Souls for Life Everlaſting: That this is a Work, like all others, which will not do it ſelf, but requires them to be very Induſtrious in it; for that the Soul bringing many Corruptions with it into the World, all theſe muſt be overcome; that many of theſe being very violent, and many very ſubtle and deceitful, no ſuch Victory can be expected, but by great Watchfulneſs on their Parts, and as great Labor; that whatever their Diligence be, they cannot poſſibly ſucceed, but by the help of the Divine Grace: That for the obtaining Grace, they muſt firſt earneſtly deſire it, and then perform thoſe Exerciſes, which God has appointed as the neceſſary Means for obtaining it: That this is not to be the Work of one Day, but of their whole Lives; for that always wanting Grace, they muſt always ſeek it, and be never be tir'd, notwithſtanding all the Difficulties of Nature, and whatever other Hindrances and Diſcou-

ragements they meet with: That their Induſtry in this, muſt be anſwerable to the Concern, for which they labor; and therefore, as their Salvation infinitely ſurpaſſes all Worldly Affairs, ſo their Care in providing for it, ought to exceed all that Diligence, with which they perform all other Buſineſs; and as no other Miſcarriage bears any proportion with this, ſo whatever be their Diſappointment in other Concerns, they are to be moſt Solicitous, there be no Miſcarriage in this, for that it will avail them nothing to gain the whole World, if they loſe their Souls. Here then is their great Task.

The Second Inſtruction muſt be, for them to conſider the particular difficulty they have in this more than others; for that their natural Temper, which bends them with ſo much earneſtneſs down to the Earth, puts Heaven out of their ſight, confines their Solicitude to Worldly Affairs, and indiſpoſes them for all Duties of Devotion; ſo that they can but ſeldom find leiſure for them, whilſt every little Buſineſs appears ſo weighty, as to be ſufficient Motive for excuſing their Prayers; and whenever they go about them, 'tis with a Heart ſo Worldly, that their Thoughts, even then, have more of Earth than Hea-

ven.

ven. Then, as for overcoming their Paſſions, this is more difficult to them, becauſe that ſome Solicitude, which hinders their Prayers, takes off their Thoughts from the conſideration of theſe; ſo that inſtead of overcoming, they ſeldom come ſo far as even to ſee them. And this more eſpecially, in regard of thoſe Diſorders, which are favorable to their Intereſt; it being very difficult for them to judge any thing Unlawful, which is for their Advantage. And therefore as for Working on Holy-days and over-reaching their Neighbor, *&c.* they have ſo many Reaſons to palliate the Tranſgreſſion, that 'tis hard for them, to ſee any Reaſon to amend. This Blindneſs extends to thoſe under their Care, eſpecially their Servants; in being hard and rigorous with them, ſcarce allowing Subſiſtance for Life, and much leſs for their Souls; being ſo far from ſpurring them on in the neceſſary Care for them, that they grudge whatever time is ſpent in ſuch Duties, and by their frequent Reproaches, do enough to diſcourage them from purſuing ſuch Pious Deſigns.

But now, however great their Difficulties be, thro' this unhappy Temper, in the due performance of ſuch Duties as God has recommended, and in overcom-

ing themselves; yet they are to remember, for a Third Instruction, that they are under a necessity of so far Mast'ring themselves, that the Principles of Faith, and not their Temper, may have the Government of their Life. This necessity may easily appear, if they consider others, who are subject to Criminal Passions; for if these have the Command, and are not subdued by the power of Grace and Faith, they will certainly separate from God; and therefore are to be overcome by as many, as ever Hope to see his Face: So it is in them; for tho' their Worldly Spirit, may not lead them into any thing, that is Scandalously Vicious; yet since 'tis a general hindrance to them, from seeking and obtaining those happy Dispositions, which the Gospel requires for entering into Life Everlasting, if that Spirit of theirs be not made subject to the better Spirit of Christ, how can they Hope to have a part in that Inheritance?

For if they Live on with a Heart solicitous for Earth, and unconcern'd for Heaven; if they let the World have the Preference of all that belongs to God; if they Neglect their Souls for every trifle; if they can bear no where any Disorder, but only in things belonging to Eternity; if they go on unmindful of refer-

what they do to God; or of the Poſſeſſion of him being the End for which they were Created, and ſcarce let their Thoughts go beyond their Well-being here: If thus, I ſay, they live on, till Death ſeizes them, can it be thought, their Souls thus Selfiſh and Earthly, are fitted for the Society of the Bleſſed? If we meaſure them by S. *Paul*'s Rule, who Charges thoſe with Idolatry, who ſet their Hearts on Riches, and by their Immoderate Love of theſe, are unmindful of their Salvation; and condemns thoſe for making their Belly their God, whoſe whole Concern is taken up in ſatisfying their Gluttonous Appetite; is there not Reaſon to fear, theſe will fall under the like hard Cenſure, whoſe Hearts are as much drawn from God, and fixt on the World, by their exceſſive Solicitude in their daily Affairs, as thoſe others by the love of Money, or themſelves? If God be not a God to them, it matters little, what their Idol is, whether of Gold or Straw, whether an Onion or the Sun; for they are alike drawn by Creatures from their God; and this cannot be thought a fit preparation for Poſſeſſing him Eternally; whilſt being on the way, this Poſſeſſion was never made the Subject of their Labors or Deſires.

Again, if we meaſure them by the Goſ-

pel Rule, we find as little Hopes: For there being direction given, to ſuch as deſire to be happy, of ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of God, of loving God with their whole Heart and Strength, of denying themſelves, of not loving the World, of bringing forth good Fruit, of improving the Talents given, of ſtriving to enter at the narrow Gate, of Faſting, Watching, Praying without ceaſing, and being ever prepar'd with Oil in their Lamps againſt the time, when the Spouſe calls; and then reflect, there is not one of theſe Points is the Concern of theſe Chriſtians, but by their Worldly Solicitude they are put by all, there is too much Reaſon to conclude, that if this their Paſſion be not brought into ſubjection to the Law of God, and the Rules of the Goſpel, thoſe Diſpoſitions will never be found in them, that are neceſſary for the Poſſeſſion of God; and therefore that theſe Chriſtians are under as great neceſſity of overcoming themſelves, as others, who are Slaves to more Criminal Paſſions.

Now for the gaining this Victory, there can be nothing more preſcrib'd, than to be ever careful in reſiſting that Inclination, which carries them with ſo much Violence to the World; for 'tis thus only the Corruption of Nature is to be overcome;

and

and tho' the Inclination, it may be, being ſo deeply rooted in their Conſtitution, may be never wholly remov'd; yet ſince this cannot be injurious to their Eternal Good, but by their yielding to it, their only help muſt be in ever ſtanding watchful againſt it, ſo that however they feel its ſecret puſhes, yet they be not govern'd by it, nor let this have the Command of their Lives; for otherwiſe, as their Inclination is Earthly, ſo will their Lives be too. And for the Practice of this Rule, their Particular Endeavor muſt be, to have appointed Times, as far as Circumſtances will allow, for Reading Good Books, for Praying and frequenting the Sacraments, and not permit their Common Worldly Affairs to put by the performance of theſe Duties; but be Conſtant in them, notwithſtanding the Difficulties of Nature, which will be ever ſuggeſting the neceſſity of doing other things. And tho', in that diſturbance of Mind, which will be uneaſie under ſuch Contradictions, they may think, that Prayers will be to no purpoſe, and that 'tis better to omit, than ſay them with ſo much diſtraction, yet they ought not to be omitted on this account; for that this being the ſtruggle of Nature, which is unwilling to yield, they can do nothing better, than to give it this Occa-

ſion of being diſturb'd, and their not regarding it, is the ſureſt way to bring it under Government: And for their Prayers, they will not be leſs acceptable for this Diſquiet, ſince 'tis only Natural, and what at preſent they cannot prevent; and being rais'd by making War againſt the Corruption of their Temper, tho' it may make a confuſion, yet it cannot take off the value of their Prayers: And this good effect may likewiſe be expected, that by a daily Reſiſtance the ſtrength of their Inclinations will be leſſen'd at leaſt, and becoming more Calm, give Hopes of Victory.

And for the Soul to be ſupported in this difficult Task, they muſt not fail in Reading ſuch Books, as may daily remind them of the Uncertainty of this World and Life, of the End of their Creation, of the Value of Eternal Goods, ſo to bring them by degrees to a true Knowledge of all that is Created, and the Belief of their only Happineſs being in the Life to come. They muſt likewiſe make frequent Application to their Director, that by his Advice their Souls may be quickn'd in the Remembrance of their Duty, and Neglect no Opportunity of hearing Inſtructions. By perſevering in this Method, there may be Hopes of a good Effect;

fect; for that God cannot deny Mercy to thoſe, who thus heartily labor for it. But if they go on their own Ways, bending their whole Thoughts on this World, and neglecting whatever may be helpful in order to Salvation, I think them to be in very dangerous Circumſtances, and that, like Sick Perſons, who obſtinately refuſe all Remedies, there's little Hopes of their ever coming to a good Diſpoſition of Health, ſuch as is neceſſary for Life Everlaſting.

For the Concluſion of this Chapter, I muſt make my Addreſs to all other Chriſtians, in deſiring them to Reflect on the Miſchiefs of almoſt all degrees of Solicitude, in the unprofitable waſting their Spirits and Souls, and taking them off from whatever Duties belong to Heaven. It ought to be the ſubject of their daily Thoughts, to conſider the one thing Neceſſary, that their great Buſineſs of Life, is the Salvation of their Souls; that in this they ought to be ever Solicitous, and as to all other things, come as near to Indifferency, as poſſible may be: So that while they have many Concerns on their Hands, and as many things, which they deſire, they are ſtill to carry on all with ſuch an Interior Moderation of Spirit, as to Remember, that as their Hea-

ven is not in any thing of this Life, ſo no thing of this Life ought to be made the ſubject of that Solicitude, which is only due to Heaven, and muſt neceſſarily ſuffer prejudice from all manner of Concern, that is immoderately fixt on Creatures: Immoderately, I ſay, for to live without Concern is not conſiſtent with the Obligations of this Life; but to prevent its riſing to an Exceſs, is the Obligation of the next; that ſo the Soul may not be unqualified for performing thoſe Duties, which are a Homage due to God, and neceſſary for bringing us to the Poſſeſſion of him.

Whence it muſt appear, that no Immoderate Solicitude, if wilfully indulg'd, can be Innocent; it is hurtful to a Chriſtian, when the Objects are moſt Innocent, as in Parents in regard of their Children; it is more reprovable, when Indifferent and Unneceſſary things are the ſubject of the Concern, as the Hearing of News, or Ordinary Divertiſements: It has ſtill a greater degree of Evil, when the Object is Dangerous, and diſpoſing to Sin, as in all that belongs to Attire, State, or the Common Entertainments of an Idle Life: It is moſt ſinful, when the Heart is bent with Eagerneſs upon what is Vicious: The Reaſon is obvious from the foregoing Principles; becauſe nothing can be Innocent,

Innocent, which draws the Soul from God, and becomes a general hind'rance in approaching to him; and this muſt be the leſs excuſable, the more 'tis occaſion'd by Paſſion, which the Diſciplin of a Chriſtian Life obliges us to overcome; and if the Object be ſinful, 'tis not then only a Hindrance, but Forſaking the Ways of God, and an abſolute Separation from him. Whence it becomes a neceſſary Rule, for Chriſtians to keep in all things the Spirit of Moderation, that ſo they may not be in danger of loſing the Eternal Goods, for what is only Temporal.

CHAP. VII.

Inſtructions for Chriſtians of an Idle Life.

BY theſe Chriſtians, I mean ſuch, as are generally Bleſs'd with Plenty, and being free from all Concern for a Subſiſtance, are not engag'd in any thing reputed Vicious, nor wholly renounce the Common Exerciſes of Piety, but ſpend the greateſt part of their Money and Time unprofitably; that is, in ſeeking

and

and pleaſing themſelves, and not in ſuch a way, as may be available to Eternity.

For the Inſtruction of this Rank of Chriſtians, I muſt deſire them to conſider the End for which they were Created; and ſince Faith teaches them, that the End of their Creation is the Poſſeſſion of God, they may from this Principle conclude, that the great Buſineſs of their Lives ought to be, in laboring to come to the Poſſeſſion of him; that whatever they do in this Life directed to this End, and is available for the obtaining it, is an Action of Faith, and therefore truly Good and Chriſtian: And as for all other Actions, that can bear no reference to this End, they muſt be judg'd unprofitable, as being not Serviceable for that End, for which they had a Being given them.

I muſt deſire them again to conſider, that whatever they poſſeſs, is the Gift of God, and that there can be no other good uſe of his Gifts, but in uſing them for that End, for which they were given. Now ſince God can propoſe no other End in what he does, but his own Glory, and the Salvation of Man, they muſt hence again conclude, that whatever Gifts they have receiv'd from the Hand of God, and are not ſo employ'd, as to have a reference to his Glory and their own Salvation,

Salvation, this cannot be a Chriſtian Uſe of them, but muſt be reputed an Abuſe.

Hence, Thirdly, They muſt conſider, that whatever Gifts they have receiv'd from God, tho' they have them in their Power and Poſſeſſion, and, as to what regards this World and the Laws of Men, may be properly call'd Maſters of whatever they poſſeſs, and may Diſpoſe of them at pleaſure, without being accountable to any; yet as they are the Creatures of God and Chriſtians, they muſt be eſteem'd only the Stewards of God, as holding nothing, but what is put by him into their Hands, to manage and diſpoſe of according to his Orders, and who will demand an Account of all that is Waſted or Miſ-ſpent.

All this is Conformable to the Idea given us in the Goſpel by Chriſt himſelf, where in the Parable of the Talents, he informs us of our Duty of Improving whatever he has entruſted with us, and that the Account will be demanded of every one, in Proportion to what they have receiv'd; ſo that they, who have receiv'd more, ſhall have more to anſwer for, than others, who have receiv'd leſs. *Cum augentur bona*, ſays S. *Gregory*, *rationes etiam creſcunt donorum.* And where in the Perſon of him, who Buried his Talent

Talent in a Napkin, he ſhews, that as they will be condemn'd of Injuſtice, who Viciouſly miſ-employ what they have receiv'd; ſo they likewiſe will be caſt off as Unprofitable Servants, who have not improv'd what was entruſted with them, to his Glory and their own Salvation. Which Truth he again declares, in Condemning the Tree, that brings forth Evil Fruit, to the Fire, and pronouncing that Tree Accurſed, which was found without Fruit; and in another Place giving Orders for its being cut down, with this reproach, *Ut quid enim terram Occupat?* Why ſhould ſuch a Uſeleſs Stock have Place in his Vineyard? And all the Reprieve, that was granted, was only in expectation of its bearing Fruit.

Now from theſe Principles let theſe Chriſtians Examin themſelves; and if can ſay with Truth, they employ nothing of what they have receiv'd from God, in any way contrary to his Law, or that is Sinful, which only proves, they are not the worſt of Chriſtians, or ſo bad as may be; let them look one ſtep farther, and ſee, if they employ what they have receiv'd, for that End, for which it was given, which is bringing forth Fruit; and then, Secondly, If they bring forth Fruit, in Proportion to what they have receiv'd:

For

For if they are wanting in this, they come ſo far ſhort of their Duty.

For their help in making this Examen, they muſt compare their Lives with the Rules now ſet down, and whatever they can diſcover in their Actions contributing to God's Honor, or their own Salvation, whatever part of their Money or Time they employ, as may be Serviceable to this End, may be all ſet down as ſo much Good Fruit. Under this Head muſt be reckon'd, their Prayers, and all Exerciſes of Devotion, their Faſting and Alms, their Works of Charity of whatever kind, if perform'd in a due manner, and upon due Motives. To this Head is to be reduc'd whatever belongs to the ſupport of Nature, in Eating, Cloathing, Sleeping, Recreating, *&c.* for that all theſe, if undertaken for preſerving what God has given into our Care, may be Acts of Juſtice, in the Compliance with that Univerſal Law, which God has laid upon all: As likewiſe whatever belongs to Buſineſs, in the Diſcharge of any lawful Profeſſion, or for making Proviſion for Family or Life, becauſe this is a Common Duty exacted from all, according to Circumſtances. Here again may come in whatever is neceſſary for keeping up a Correſpondence with Friends, or ſhewing that Reſpect

ſpect, which Chriſtian Civility requires; becauſe this is anſwerable to his Will, who has made us One Body.

But then, if taking a Review of their Lives, they can ſee but very little of their Time and Money employ'd this way, but that generally the great Buſineſs of the Day, the Week, and the Year, is to gratifie their own Corrupt Paſſions, to anſwer the Inclinations of Sloth, Curioſity, Vanity, Intemperance, Prodigality, Ambition, Senſuality; to comply with the Rules of a perverſe World, in Contempt of what the Goſpel requires; if they find this to be the Method of their Lives, and that tho' Prayer and the Works of Faith be not wholly renounc'd, yet that the main Body of their Actions is regulated by Inclination and the World, without any regard to another that is to come; may not they hence begin to queſtion the State of their Souls being unſafe at leaſt, ſince they find, upon calling over their Accounts, they bring not forth Fruit according to what they have receiv'd, nor make the Bleſſings of God Serviceable for that End, for which they were given? But inſtead of employing them in ways, that may contribute to his Honor, or their own Eternal Good, they Live unmindful of their being given them for any ſuch deſign, and turn them into

into ſuch a Courſe, as has God neither in the Beginning nor Ending, and help very much to encreaſe the Difficulties of their Salvation.

Pleaſing an Extravagant World or themſelves, is not the Fruit God expects; and therefore, if they, who have receiv'd more than others, make this ill uſe of his Bleſſings, as only ſo much more to ſeek themſelves in all that is pleaſing to their Slothful or Vain Humor, and to Court the Eſteem of Men; ſo that the Principal Effect of all that God has given them above others, is only to be more Lazy, more Proud, more Extravagant than others; how can they, from this proſpect, poſſibly find Reſt to their Souls? Since tho' they may be otherwiſe free from Crimes, that are Scandalous, yet they ſee ſuch an ill Adminiſtration of whatever God has put into their Hands, that they proſtitute all that to Appetite and Corruption, which was given them as Helps to Salvation; and hence are incapable of rend'ring to God an Account of their Stewardſhip; in which, tho' there may be no Injuſtice, as to the World, yet, I fear, it will be found a moſt Criminal Injuſtice in the ſight of God.

For were there no other Obligation of Juſtice upon Chriſtians, but to their Neighbor

bor only, then thoſe, who wrong not th eir Neighbor in any kind, could not be charg'd with the breach of this Duty: But ſince Juſtice has other branches, and thoſe the more Principal, which Chriſtians are moſt ſtrictly bound to ſatisfie, and that is, to God and their own Souls; then thoſe, who give not to God, what belongs to God, and to their Souls, what belongs to them, may ſtill lye under the guilt of the greateſt Injuſtice, tho' no Neighbor can Charge them in any Point of their having been Unjuſt to them. Here then is the Point theſe Chriſtians are to conſider: God has depoſited his Gifts in their Hands, that by the good uſe of them, he may be Glorified, and Proviſion be made for their Eternal Happineſs. For this they have more Time granted them, in being deliver'd from the unhappy Neceſſities, which others Groan under, and have no other Relief, but from the Sweat of their Brows: They have greater Liberty of Mind, in not being perplex'd with the Thoughts of getting Bread: They have more plenty of Money, wherewith to anſwer all thoſe Pious Deſigns, which Charity can ſuggeſt for obtaining the Favor of Heaven. Theſe are particular Gifts of God, which are to be receiv'd with Gratitude, and, like ſo many Ta-

lents,

lents, to be employ'd according to the design of the Giver, if they think of being approv'd as Just and Faithful Stewards. And is it thus they employ their Time, their Thoughts, and their Money? Is God more Glorified by the Advantages they have above their Neighbor? Are their Souls better provided? No; all is made the Food of Self-love, Corruption is more enlarg'd, their Passions are strengthn'd, the World is more courted: And thus is wasted whatever they possess above others, of Time, Quiet, or Money, without any consideration of its being due to God and their own Souls. And can this be without the Guilt of Injustice? Certainly this is an Injustice as much greater than any other, as their Duty to God and their own Souls, is above all others of this World.

Q. *What; would you oblige Persons of Estates to employ whatever they have of Time or Money above others, in the Duties of Religion and Piety?*

A. I would have them live as Christians, and not let the Plenty of Temporal Blessings make them forget the Giver, or the End, for which they were given. If you look back on what I have said above, you will see, I have not tied them up so streight, as to restrain them from the Enjoyment

of

of what they poſſeſs. I allow them all that Neceſſity, Reaſonable Decency, Convenience, and Juſt Recreation can require: And in this they have great Advantages above others: But while their Eſtates excuſe them from Laboring for Bread, yet they ought not for this, give themſelves up to Eaſe, Idleneſs and Sloth, and forget to Labor for Heaven. While their Eſtates abundantly Furniſh them with all Neceſſaries for Life, and a Commodious Being, yet theſe ought not to feed their Vanity, Intemperance and Ambition, ſo as to devour all that, which, by the direction of Charity, ſhould be their Proviſion for Heaven. While their Eſtates give them Liberty for more than ordinary Divertiſements; yet theſe ought to be only the Relief, and not the Buſineſs of Life. Now tho' here be ſome reſtraints upon theſe Perſons, yet I hope you will not Charge this as the Suggeſtion of a Melancholy Retirement, ſince 'tis no other, but what the Goſpel puts upon all Chriſtians, and is neceſſary for living up to this Profeſſion. And if there be Perſons, who divide the Day betwixt Sleeping Ten or Twelve Hours, and Dreſſing, Eating, Drinking, and in Divertiſements all the reſt, and ſo make up the Four and Twenty, I cannot but apprehend their

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future State, and fear they will never find any other Heaven, but that, which they make to themſelves upon Earth.

Q. *What therefore would you have them do?*

A. I would have theſe Chriſtians contrive ſome Method for employing their Time and Money better than they do. A little Reflection will inform them, that their Love of Idleneſs and Eaſe, is the occaſion of a general Neglect in all Duties, that are for their Eternal Intereſt; that having more Time than others, they are leſs Faithful than others in all the Practices of Religion; that they are leſs watchful of their Paſſions, expoſe themſelves more to the Dangers of Company, and to the Temptations of the Devil; that having more Money than others, and conſequently greater Opportunities of laying up Treaſures in Heaven, they make this ſerve only to render them more Extravagant than others: Much more of this kind they may ſoon diſcover in themſelves. And if all this be the effect of their Idle and Lazy Humor, they can have no Remedy, but in changing the whole Method of their Lives.

This cannot be done otherwiſe, than by Obliging themſelves to ſome more regular way, not living by chance, nor leaving

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ing all to Humor and Accident; but, with good Advice, eſtabliſhing ſome Order and Diſciplin to be generally, at leaſt, obſerv'd, Seaſonable Hours are to be appointed for Going to Bed and Riſing; there muſt be Times for Reading, and Praying, and frequenting the Sacraments; and theſe being the Ordinary Means for obtaining the Grace of God, Sloth, Inclination or Divertiſements muſt not be enough to diſpence with theſe Duties; for their great Misfortune having been in yielding too much in Favor of theſe, they muſt now ſtand againſt them with the greater Reſolution; not thinking then only of making Reſiſtance, when there is ſomething Sinful propos'd; but as often as this Diſciplin is in danger of being interrupted, by ſome offer more pleaſing to their Habitual Diſtemper; for if this Point be not gain'd, there can never long be wanting Occaſions, pleading Reaſon and Neceſſity, of again returning into the former Diſorder. Matters being thus ſettled in the Spiritual Concern, Care muſt be taken for preventing the Miſchiefs of other Idle Hours: and this cannot be, but by ſome Employment, which may be the Buſineſs of every Day. Men may find this in their Book or Pen, and Women at their Needle. For where there is an Eſtate and Family,

neither

neither Sex can want their Employment, if they desire to see things manag'd according to the Obligation of their State: And if there be still some leisure Hours, 'tis a Reproach to own, that they cannot find some better Entertainment, than what is to flatter their Corruption, and are therefore forc'd to be Idle, because they know not what to do. Charity can never fail of Employing the Needle; and amongst so many Sciences and Histories, there cannot want Books, such as may be suitable to all Tempers, and profitable in all Conditions. But to help out still, may there not be found some Friends, whose Conversation is both grateful and Innocent? For tho' there's a necessity of breaking off the usual Correspondence with those, whose Example is an Encouragement to Idleness; yet all Company is not to be renounc'd, but those made choice of, who may Divert, without Corrupting. And then for Times of Recreation, I am so far from making Exceptions here, that I think them necessary; for those, I mean, who know how to be Serious, and employ either their Hands or Mind a considerable part of the Day. And therefore as for Games, Dancing, Park, Plays, *&c.* I can easily allow of these, for the Encouragement of Industrious Minds;

Minds; especially with these Conditions: First, That there be nothing prejudicial to Innocence and Virtue. Secondly, That they be not a disturbance to the Discipline establish'd, on which all depends. Thirdly, That there be no such Constancy in any sort of Recreation, as to grow into love with it: For then that, which is design'd to help, will become dangerous in its Consequences. These Conditions are strictly to be observ'd, or otherwise under the Color of Recreations, all that Idleness will be usher'd in, which we undertake to Remedy. And therefore, for those, who have little choice in their Divertisements, and will rather hazard Virtue, than deny their Inclinations; who let their Company and Gaming break all Order, who make Recreation their greatest Business, who are set on with so much Eagerness, as to neglect both their Spiritual and Domestic Affairs; who run into Excesses, *&c.* these are Circumstances, which pervert the End of Recreation; and they, who follow this Practice, are, at the best, Unprofitable Servants, who will never be able to give an Account of what they have receiv'd; and it must be no less than a Miracle, if they fall not at length into some Notorious Extravagance; since there are so

that, at once, run into the depth of Vice, but come to it by these steps, which are seemingly Innocent.

Take but an account of the many Families in this Nation, which have the Blessings of Plenty; look well into them and see, how few live up to the Rules of that Gospel, which they profess; how few make a Christian use of what they have receiv'd. 'Tis enough to strike a thinking Soul with Confusion and Terror, to see how many run into those ways, which the Gospel disapproves, how Prodigality, Ambition, Luxury and Intemperance are kept up amongst them, how their Estates are wasted in all manner of Excess, how Self-love and Corruption exhaust their Stocks, how Sloth and Ease are indulg'd, how Contemptible is every thing, that belongs to Religion and Eternity, how Riots and Prophaneness are their Common Entertainments: And when you are recover'd from the Horror of this dismal Prospect, Examin but the Root of this Christian Infidelity, and you will find Idleness to be the cause of all. They first begin with an Aversion to all manner of Business, the love of Ease follows naturally upon this; then comes in the desire of Company and Recreation to help away their Hours; these break in upon the

Rules of Disciplin; the Duties of Soul and Family are thus neglected; this gives liberty to their Passions; these gaining Authority and Strength, stifle all the Principles of Faith and Reason; hence the great Concern is not, of what is serviceable for a future State, but what is most agreeable to the present. This is the Disposition of Soul, into which they are insensibly brought: And then, what wonder is there in all the confusion, that follows? Wherefore, tho' I approve of Divertisements, yet it must be no matter of Surprize, if I condemn their excess; since if a Christian comes under this cover, to love an Idle Life, he needs no more, to draw him into the number of those unhappy ones, who ungratefully abuse the Blessings of Heaven, make the great Duties yield to Inclination, and provoke the Wrath of God, on themselves and their Generations after them. And therefore, tho' I have hitherto consider'd Idleness in the most favorable Sence, as not tainted with Vice; yet now I must declare it, as the Root of all Vice, and the direct way to it; and to say, A Christian of an Idle Life, is to say, A Christian, that has forsaken God, or is in the ready way of doing it. For as that Field which has no part of the Husbandman's Care, but

left to the products of its own Corruption, must soon be overgrown with Thorns, and become the shelter for Beasts; so the Soul, which is not manur'd by the Labors and Disciplin of a Christian Life, but left to the Effects of its own Corruption, must necessarily become Barren as to all that is good; and it can be no wonder, if the worst of Evil Spirits take up their Abode there. So that, if you tell me, where there are Christians engag'd in this Method of Idleness; without rash Judgment I presently enquire; Is not there a general Neglect of all that belongs to God? Is not there an Estate wasting in Prodigality and Extravagance; Days and Nights spent in Gaming and Intemperance? Is not there an Assembly of Vain, Vicious and Prophane Company? And if I am inform'd of nothing of all this appearing, I must reply; Wait and observe a little; for this Evil Fruit will soon grow up; the Tares are sown, and a little time will shew them; the Evil Spirits are modest and reserv'd at first, before they come to be Noon-day Devils.

This is generally, I fear, the Effect of an Idle Life; and while I undertake here to prescribe, I must own the difficulty of the Cure; because since all manner of ill

Habits grow by the Favor of this Unchristian Rest; to give Directions here for a Reformation, is to oblige Men to make War against all manner of Passions. And how hard must it be for Men, to be put upon a lasting Labor, who love nothing more than Ease; to be bound to Watch, who have an Aversion to Care and Foresight; to be Summon'd to take up Arms, who are pleas'd with nothing but the Softness of a luxurious Peace? How hard must it be when Exceptions are made against all their Ways, and a Caveat put in by the Gospel against all their Proceedings? When they are requir'd to Regulate their Hours, to Moderate their Expences of Table, Habit, Divertisement and State, to decline the Company, that that is most pleasing, to raise their Affections from Earth, and turn them with violence towards Heaven, to take part in that Penance, which was enjoin'd by God on all the Children of Heaven. This must be a Task of difficulty, and yet must be perform'd; for since Happiness is promis'd on no other Terms, they who renounce or comply not with the Conditions, can Hope for no part in the Promises; but for their Ease and Neglects here, must expect to be Eternally Miserable. And what a Change must that be, when those who

who by the abuſe of many Years, have brought their Souls to the unhappy Diſpoſition of bearing nothing but what pleaſes, ſhall be Hurried into a State, where thoſe Deſires ſhall be unchangeable, and for Eternity ſeparated from all whatever they deſire; where Everlaſting Deſpair and Confuſion ſhall be the only Entertainment of Souls, that, at the ſame time, love nothing but themſelves.

And now, if this be the Difficulty, and theſe the Conſequences of an Idle Life, how watchful ought all Young Perſons of both Sexes to be, that this Evil grow not upon them? When they ſtep into the World out of their Parents Care, then is the Nice time, on which all depends; then comes the Temptation of thinking themſelves at Liberty, of laying by all Rules, as now not neceſſary for them, who are under no Command, of conſulting their Inclinations in all that pleaſes, of obſerving what the World admires, and hearkning to all its Flatteries, of judging whatever is Grave and Serious not ſuitable to their Age; with a Thouſand other Follies, which are ſuggeſted by the Example and Raileries of thoſe, who having no Principles, but of Senſe and Vanity, ſet up for Advocates of Liberty, and Guides to unexperienc'd Years.

And if they are ſo unhappy, as to open their Hearts to theſe Impreſſions, they needs no more to lay the Foundation of an Unchriſtian and Vicious Life, and by their indiſcretion, create to themſelves ſuch difficulties, which blinded by Cuſtom they will either never ſee, or ſcarce take Pains to overcome. Wherefore thoſe are much to be Commended, who, learning by others experience, venture not into this way, but finding ſome Home Entertainment for their Hands or Mind, take up their Thoughts with ſomething more Serious, avoid the Occaſions of Idleneſs and Company, and go early into that Method, in which they muſt be found, if they ever Hope to Change this Life for a better.

And to prepare Young People for making this Choice, how careful ought the Parents to be, in laying ſuch Principles in them by a diſcreet Education, by which they may be provided againſt the Dangers of Corruption? They ought carefully to ſeaſon their yet tender Minds with the Thoughts of having an Eſtate, not ſo much to enjoy, as to manage and give an Account of to God, whoſe Stewards they are: That it being the Bleſſing of Heaven the uſe of it muſt not be, to ſupport Liberty and Luxury, and to carry them

Hearts

hearts with greater violence to the World; not for their Subsistance in this Life, and to furnish them with means of gaining that, which is Eternal. That tho' by this Bounty of God, they are not in a necessity of Working for Bread, yet they have still Heaven to Work for; and if they let their Estates be the Occasion of Neglecting this Duty, they cannot expect new Mercies, who live in the constant abuse of what they have already receiv'd. That tho' that, which the World calls the Life of a Gentleman or Lady, is in esteem here with Men; yet there is nothing in it self more Contemptible, since 'tis a Renunciation of all that is Substantial and Serious, and busie in nothing, but in running after Shadows, and Courting of Smoke. 'Tis set in Opposition to Heaven, first in abjuring that Penance of Labor, which God has impos'd on all, and then in making its whole Business to magnifie those very things, which God has condemn'd for the most Abject and Contemptible: All that it esteems and seeks is Vanity, Sense, and the Opinion of Men; from which, tho' none on Earth can be wholly exempt thro' the Weight of Corruption, yet to make these the design of Life, to admire, desire, seek and give all for the Purchase, as is the Busi-

ness of this kind of Life, is so very Mean, Absurd and Foolish in the Christian Scheme, that the Laborious Porter and Plowman have much the preference to this kind of Flutter. This Truth, so conform to the Gospel, ought to be well imprinted in Youth, that so they may rather fear than love it, and become by degrees to esteem more of plain but wholsom Meat, than gilded Poyson. For this End Parents go very much out of the way, when by the Soft, Nice and Vain Education of their Children, they take Pains in Teaching them to be in love with all those things, which the Gospel condemns as Follies and greatest Impediments, to Salvation; and thus by the Expressions of a Natural, but not Christian Love, set them early in the Broad Way, even the Way to Damnation; in which, by the help of an Idle Life, they often Live to see them so far advanc'd, as to despair of their recovery. Whereas it ought to be their continual Care, to arm them by a better Method, against these destructive Snares, into which those, who are Born to Estates, run with too much Eagerness of themselves, without the help of such Instructions. Wherefore, instead of teaching them to admire Vanity and Idleness, they ought to Train them to some Em-

Employment or Buſineſs, to make them to love with Working or Reading, and other Affairs ſuitable to their Capacity and Age; not barring them from fitting Recreations; but ſo ordering theſe, that they may be both Relief and Encouragement to more Serious Hours. That Tenderneſs, which is in thoſe Years, makes Youth capable of Good Impreſſions, as well as Evil, and may give Hopes to Parents of forming their Souls by the Example and good Leſſons, which they give them. And if afterwards they ſhould find themſelves diſappointed, there will be this Comfort at leaſt, that this is only their Misfortune, and not their Fault, and that their Childrens Loſs will not be their own Damnation.

CHAP. VIII.

Inſtructions for Chriſtians ſubject to Intemperance.

I Mean here thoſe principally, who are ſubject to the Sin of Drunkenneſs, whoſe principal Inſtruction muſt come from that Character, which the H. Scripture

gives of it, declaring it to be one of the Works of the Flesh, which they that do shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. *Gal.* 5. 21. and in another place numbers Drunkards in particular amongst those, who shall be excluded from Eternal Life. There cannot want more than this for the discouragement of Christians from this Vice; for if they believe a future State, and have this Sentence of Exclusion pronounc'd by his Mouth, on whom depends their Eternal Lot; as they see the Vice already Judg'd, so are they, if by a timely Repentance and Amendment they disengage not themselves from it: Without this there is no place left for Hope; but as they live in a desperate State, so they will likely come to Die in Despair.

The Reason of this so positive Sentence is Obvious from the consideration of the Crime, in general; for since 'tis so expressly forbid in Holy Writ, whoever lives in the Practice of it, lives in an express Disobedience and Contradiction to the Will of God; and if doing his Sacred Will be indispensibly necessary for Salvation, Disobedience, and the Contempt of it, can be no less, than renouncing all Hopes of Mercy, and the Happiness of a future State. Let the Consideration more in Retail, will give greater Light to this Truth.

First

First then, if we consider it in its Immediate Effect of overwhelming the Judgment, and drowning Reason; in the Oppression of these Faculties we see this Crime so wholly disabling a Christian in the performing of all Duties, that he is quite unman'd, and basely degraded into a Brute. This is an Affront to his Creator, in unmaking himself what God has made him; and whilst it renders him uncapable of satisfying any one Obligation belonging to him, either as Man or Christian, it makes void all the Design of Heaven, in those great Mercies, which has been done for him in the Works of our Redemption and Sanctification.

Secondly, If we consider the hazards of Sin, to which a Man expoles himself by this Vice; for Reason being dethron'd, all the Passions are now at liberty, and without any controul, run into all the Extravagancies of Lewdness and Prophaneness, to which his Natural Corruption leads him.

Thirdly, If we Reflect, how many Evils generally attend this one, in the Encouragement of all that is Prophane and Sensual, in the ill Example given, in drawing others into Sin, in the misspending Money and Time, in the Disorder and Difference it causes in Families,

lies, in the Ruin of Estates, and bringing Wife and Children into Distress; besides the infinit Neglects occasion'd by it in all Spiritual Duties; for as a Christian accustom'd to this ill Habit, becomes insensibly so Dull and Sottish, as to be little touch'd with the Concern of another Life; so all Disciplin is altogether lost in his Family, by his disorder, that nothing can be perform'd with any tolerable Regularity or Comfort. Now while one Evil is so unhappily Fruitful in bringing forth so many other Evils, and too often Tramples on the whole Law of God; while Men are sporting with their Neighbors Souls, while they have their Drink mix'd with Blasphemies, while they swallow down the Comfort of their Families, and have their Cups running over with the Blood of Widows and Orphans who are wanting Bread, because they deny them their due; it can be no wonder, that this Vice is condemn'd by so positive a Sentence of God's Sacred Word.

And tho' such, whose strength of Brain secures them against the loss of their Reason, may think themselves exempt from the Crime of Drunkenness, yet, bating this one Point only, their Guilt is still the same: For if they Examin the Time and

More

Money they throw away, the many Sins attending their Entertainments, the Snares they lay before others in drawing them into Excess, and wickedly Triumphing over their Weakness, the Indisposition they bring upon their own Souls, as to all the Duties of Eternity, the Comforts they take from their Families, the ill Example they give to Friends, Children and Servants, the Injury they do to their Estates, the Preference they give to their Inclinations, in feeding these with what Justice demands for the Payment of Debts, the Prejudice they do to their Health, and to all the Gifts of Nature, by which God enabled them for great Services, both for his Honor and Public Good, and by their Sottish Humor, they have made all useless: If [illegible] Examin, I say, these general Circumstances, besides infinit others, which occasionally happen, and are best known to God and themselves, and see, that being Born for Working out their Salvation, and blest with Health and Plenty for doing good in their Generations, they let their Fondness of Company, and Drink, take them from all other Duties, so as to live almost without the Concern of another Life, they will have no Reason to presume of their Innocence for not losing

their

their Senses, but will find Guilt enough to draw upon them the Sentence of the worst of Drunkards.

The Sight of the Crime and its Punishment, may be enough to raise a dislike of it, even in those, who are most engag'd, especially at such a time, when they give themselves liberty to think. And if Reason and Faith had any Power with them, the Sense of present Inconveniencies and future Punishments, would put them upon considering the most effectual Means of delivering themselves from the Slavery of this Vice. And if they are so unhappy as to enter into this Deliberation, what way are they to take?

The very same, which some of them are oblig'd to, when by repeated Excesses, they have brought themselves into such a dangerous Distemper of Body, that if they quit not their usual Method of Drinking, they can expect nothing, but immediate Death. For as then Necessity forces them to forsake their Company and Drink to observe Prescriptions and Rules, to consider in every thing, not their Inclinations, but only what is proper for mastering their Distemper; so they are to proceed in the Case propos'd, letting Reason and Faith have the same Effect upon them, as the desire of Health.

For

For tho' they have no Diſeaſe of Body, yet they have of Soul, and ſuch an one, as is certainly Mortal. And in this Caſe Reaſon and Faith aſſure them, that if they take not ſpeedy Care to maſter it, they may infallibly look for Death; a Death, which is Eternal; they have this Aſſurance from the Mouth of that Phyſician, who has a perfect Knowledge of their Diſtemper, and the Conſequence of it; he gives them no Promiſe of Time, but, inſtead of this, poſitively tells them, they are not ſecure of a Day, but that this very Hour they may be ſnatch'd away. If they purſue their uſual Courſe of Company and Drinking, they certainly encreaſe their Diſeaſe, and haſten Death. What then are they to do in theſe Circumſtances, but ſuppoſing themſelves to be deſperately Sick, take the ſame Method, by Choice, for the Cure of their Souls, which Sickneſs would oblige them to for the Health of their Bodies?

They have then no ſurer way than to conſider the Company, that is, the general Occaſion and Encouragement of their Exceſs, and reſolve upon withdrawing from it: They are to conſider the Drink, that is moſt inviting, and if it be not adviſable at once to bid it Farewel, at leaſt to appoint certain Limits not to be exceed-

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ed, or wholly to Abstain some determinate Days. They are to observe Hours for Retiring Home at Nights, and not venture into such places, where they have been formerly drawn into Intemperance. And for greater security, they are to think of some Business either at Home or Abroad, that may be the daily Employment of their Thoughts and Time; and amongst all their Acquaintance, make Choice of some, whose Sobriety and Experience may be an Encouragement to their Undertaking.

These Directions some may follow, without any other difficulty, but what is within themselves; but the Circumstance of others may not be so easie, whilst they know not how to deliver themselves from Importunity, Reproach, and Occasion, which are too Powerful for them. Wherefore these cannot do better than to think of some place, to which they may withdraw for a time at least, so to avoid these Provocations, and by an undisturb'd Application of their Mind to Exercises of Piety, strengthen their Resolutions against their return. Those are happy Opportunities, which some Foreign Countries afford, of having Families of Pious and Exemplar Persons, into which all those have liberty of retiring

ning, who find the World and its Corruptions too powerfully prevailing upon them, and desire, by the admirable Conveniencies of such a Retreat, to overcome their ill Habits, and be provided against their usual Snares. What we want of this kind, may be in part supplied by an Industrious and Resolute Mind, which, upon consulting Friends, may find some Convenience, where separate from their Acquaintance, and by the help of a Pious Director, they may have Opportunity of looking back upon the Danger, in which they have liv'd, improve the Grace, which is given them, and arm themselves against future Occasions, which after such an Interruption, may with more Ease be resisted. This is one of the Methods generally observ'd for recovery of Health, and changing an ill Habit of Body; nothing being so Modish, as going into the Country, and seeking Change of Air. And were there but a like Concern for Soul, would not this be sufficient to suggest to them, what they ought to do, for bringing it to a better Habit; and not dwell on in an Air, that is Infectious to them, when by a removal, they may easily find that, which would so much contribute to their Amendment?

But in whatever place or manner this be under-

undertaken, there must be expected gre
difficulties in the progress of it. For
ture being thus Contradicted in wha
most pleasing to it, and Custom has ma
almost look like Necessary, the Inclinat
ons must be very violent, which are to
overcome, and by their frequent retur
will afford matter for a lasting War.
since this Victory is absolutely necessa
for their Temporal and Eternal Good
and the difficulties are only such, whic
by a Vicious indulgence they have rais'd
themselves, there's no Remedy, but
fighting their way thro' them, by frequen
Self-denials endeavoring to break all the
force, and gaining now that ground
Resistance, which they have lost by yi
ing. This is a Trouble, which can
be excus'd, but must be submitted to,
a necessary Punishment of past Faults,
for the obtaining a future Peace; the
must now carry the Burthen, they ha
on their Shoulders, and remove the Stu
bling-blocks, they have laid in their wa
And as for any easier Method, of Confe
sing their Sins of Intemperance, witho
observing these Rules for their Amend
ment, 'tis to no purpose, but only to
buse the Sacraments and themselves. N
that the Power of the Keys is to b
question'd, or the Effects to be doubte

of a Sincere Confeſſion; but that ſuch Confeſſions are not Sincere nor Sacramental, but Lame, Deceitful and Phariſaical. The Confeſſion preſcrib'd by Chriſt and his Church, is ſuch as is accompanied with true Repentance, with a Change of Heart, involving a Deteſtation of paſt Sins and a Reſolution of forſaking and puniſhing them; if it has not this Spirit of Contrition and Satisfaction, 'tis not the Confeſſion of the Goſpel, which has the Promiſe of thoſe Sins being forgiven in Heaven, which are here forgiven on Earth. And therefore, whoever of theſe Intemperate Chriſtians, undertake to confeſs their Exceſſes, and do not think of ſome Method proper for overcoming their Vice, and preventing Relapſes; but ſtill continue on in all the uſual Occaſions of their Evil, without making a Rational and Juſt Proviſion againſt them, nor bearing the Thoughts of ſuch Practical Self-denials, as muſt be the Remedy of their weakneſs; they cannot expect any part in the promis'd Forgiveneſs; but a Puniſhment for Mocking God, in pretending to Repent, and making no preparation againſt their returning to the Vomit.

I know, they may eaſily have Thoughts of Repentance, and upon conſidering the Vicious Habit, in which they are engag'd

gag'd, be Troubled at the ill State of their Souls, and have Desires to Amend: But how short does this come of a true Repentance, if they do not Consult upon Means for mast'ring their Evil, and resolve upon putting them in Execution? If they have not already had sufficient Experience of their own Weakness, they might have some Confidence in their Desires of Amendment, and not be so Nice in descending to particular Remedies: But since they see how unable they are to bear either Importunities to Drink, or the Reproaches of being Sober, how easily they are drawn into Excess, without intending it, and that every little pretext is enough to bring them into the Occasion; they may hence see, that being troubled at their Weakness, and the Desires of overcoming it are not sufficient for their Repentance, except at the same time they lay the Ax to the Root, and cut off the Occasions of their Evil; for thus only can their Desires be prov'd Sincere and Effectual.

They are therefore oblig'd to come to more Particulars; and since the Love of Wine and Strong Drink brings Death to their Soul, they must prevent this Danger, either by a total Abstinence, or a strict Moderation; because 'tis necessary for their Spiritual Health.

If

If the Love of Company and Paſtime their general Invitation, there muſt be ſome Expedient againſt it, by finding ſome more Commendable Employment and Divertiſement leſs dangerous. The Company muſt be eſteem'd Contagious to them, and to be avoided for Health ſake, as much as if they had the Plague.

If keeping up the Spirits, or driving away Cares, be a Perſwaſive, they muſt prepare againſt this Folly, by the Principles of Chriſtian Wiſdom, and not ſeek a Remedy worſe than the Diſeaſe, nor Cure an ordinary Indiſpoſition, by taking Poyſon. Oppreſſion of Spirits and Trouble have in the Goſpel-Diſpenſatory more becoming Helps, ſuch as will either remove the Diſeaſe, or make an Advantage of it: 'Tis in theſe Circumſtances God himſelf offers to be their Phyſician, and calls them under his Care; why then ſhould they go to *Beelzebub*, and draw upon their Heads Eternal Evils, for a falſe Cure of what is but Inconſiderable? Some Reſolutions are therefore to be taken againſt this Cheat; and thoſe, who are in earneſt, muſt learn to ſeek Comfort in Virtue, and not in the Amuſements of Drink, which only puts Misfortunes out of Sight for the preſent; and inſtead of Remedying, helps to Encreaſe them.

If

If the Fear of being reproach'd for Sobriety draws into a Compliance, some Pains must be taken for establishing the Soul in better Principles, such as may teach them to esteem the Reproaches of ill Company more honourable than their Applauses; for 'tis the Christian's Honor to be ridicul'd for avoiding Sin. And this is the best Recompence they can make for their past Disorders: For if formerly, by their ill Example, they have given Encouragement to Sin, Justice now obliges them, by a more than ordinary Regularity, to make Reparation for those Follies. Therefore S. *Peter* cries out to them, *Sufficit præteritum tempus ad voluntatem gentium consummandam, his qui ambulaverunt in vinolentiis*, 1 Pet. 4. 3. 'Tis enough, that in your past Years, you have abandon'd your selves to the Passions of Unbelievers, living in Drunkenness, in Gluttony, and Excess of Wine. Now let your old Companions have occasion to wonder, that you concur not with them, as you have done, in their Excesses and Luxury, let them Revile and Blaspheme you. This is the Substance of his Advice, and must be the Sign of their Conversion; for if for the Cause of Virtue and Duty, they cannot bear the Raileries of Sinners, 'tis an Argument

ment of their not being yet true Disci-
es, who have more Regard to the
reath of Men, than to the Will of
heir Maſter. Tho' to favor them too
n their own Weakneſs, they need not
ear the Loſs of their good Opinion,
ince whatever be their Expreſſions over
heir Cups, if ever they come to be ſeri-
us, they will certainly eſteem their Con-
uct, and admire their Conſtancy, in not
eing prevail'd on by importunity, to
azard a Relapſe into their former In-
emperance. It will be applauded at
eaſt by all ſober Friends; and if they
ould poſſibly fail of this, they would
ave the Joy of Angels in their Conver-
ion, to recompence whatever Loſs they
uffer in the Opinion of Men. So much
ourage therefore 'tis neceſſary they
hould obtain, for otherwiſe, there can
e no Solidity in their Reſolutions, if
hey are yet ſo weak, as to be laugh'd out
f their Duty.

These and ſuch other Particulars muſt
e the Concern of theſe Chriſtians, as
ften as they think of Repentance; for
aving, by their Irregularity, brought a
eneral Weakneſs on themſelves, their
onverſion obliges them to provide a-
inſt it, by conſidering all the Hazards
efore them; and whatever Difficulties
there

there appear in their Cure, they cannot be in earnest, till they are resolute in going thro' them. 'Tis the want of this is the Unhappy Occasion of so many living in the Profession of Religion, and in the Practice of Unbelievers; whilst their Faith having no part in the Conduct of their Lives, they abandon themselves to the Guidance of their Passions, even like those, who believe not. And hence, I question not, may be dated the Overthrow of so many Honourable Families, who having been Eminent for Piety, are now Open to all the Corruptions of this Vicious Age, The Love of Company and Drink have brought all Discipline into Contempt upon this, Disorders grow, Intemperance is favour'd, and encourag'd; with this come in all its Attendants of Sensuality and Prophaneness; none are welcom, but those, who are bold enough, to laugh at all that is Serious; the Vineyard being thus laid open to Swine, what must become of the Fruit? All is wasted by degrees; Impiety and Irreligion take Root, and those, whom Plenty and Education give them many Advantages, and fit them for being Examples of Honor, Piety and Justice, are the most Scandalous of all that profess Religion, and are Eminent in nothing but

but in out-doing their Neighbors in all that is Vicious and Diſhonourable.

This is a ſevere Judgment of God for the Abuſe of his Bleſſings, and I wiſh it extend not yet further; for when I ſee, amongſt ſo many Families yet left, how very few there are, that keep up Chriſtian Diſciplin, and live according to what they profeſs; but all generally go on in the Ways of thoſe, who have already miſcarried, in all manner of Exceſſes and Prodigality, I cannot but apprehend this as a Sign of God's Wrath, and that they are deſign'd for Ruin, who are thus permitted to ſeek Glory in their Extravagancies. I wiſh therefore, thoſe, who are concern'd, would by a timely Reformation, diſarm that Hand, which they have provoked to do Juſtice upon them, and permit their Houſes no longer to be the Harbor of Diſorderly Perſons, and Schools of Intemperance, for the Corruption of the Unwary, and making thoſe Maſters in Iniquity, who are already corrupted; but bring all under better Diſciplin, even the Diſciplin of that Goſpel, which they profeſs, and by its Direction, learn to live Soberly, Piouſly and Juſtly; making uſe of God's Bleſſings for the gaining of Heaven, edifying Unbelievers in the Practice of Reli-

gion, and doing Right to all, where-ever it is due: For thus only can they make Atonement for paſt Scandals, and turn away the weight of God's Juſtice, which is falling on them and their Generations.

And for thoſe of a lower Rank, who have the greateſt Part in the Penance of Sin, in gaining their Bread by the Sweat of their Brows, is it not a Shame they ſhould make void all their Labors, both as to this World, and the next, by their Love of Ale-houſes and Pots; their ſporting away at Night what they gain with Toil in the Day, and ſwallowing down what ſhould be the Comfort of their Families, the Proviſion of their Children, and Support of their Old Age? This is a piece of ill Husbandry, leſs pardonable in theſe, becauſe they know the Difficulty of gaining their Money, they know their Children have no other Dependance, but on their Labor, and, if they come to be diſabled by Sickneſs or Age, they have no Rents to ſecure them againſt Diſtreſs. They ſee likewiſe ſo many Inſtances before them of this ill Management, in ſo many Houſekeepers thrown into Priſon, ſo many quitting their Dwellings, and leaving their Families to ſtruggle with Miſery, that one would

would think, the many Tragedies wrought under Ale-houſe and Tavern Roofs, were enough to put theſe in Mind of their Danger, and make them think themſelves unſafe there, where ſo many have periſh'd before them. And yet to ſee theſe Houſes ſo throng'd, and Men, for the Brutiſh Satisfaction of a few Hours, to betray themſelves and Families to Beggary, to be the unnatural Executioners of their own Children, to loſe their Reputation in this World, and their Souls in the next, is enough to make one think that all theſe have renounc'd both Religion and Reaſon, and that all the Happineſs they know of is center'd in a Bottel. Unhappy Wretches, who know how to venture ſo much for Drink, and ſo little for God; who being call'd to provide for Eternity, drown all the Care of their Souls by Intemperance, till they come to laugh at length at themſelves, for ſaying they believe in God!

Not that I can reprove theſe laboring Men, in ſeeking ſome Relief for their Labors; this is neceſſary for them; but then, as their Labors are Chriſtian and Commendable, their Recreations ought to be ſo too. Wherefore I could wiſh all of this Rank would follow the better Example of ſome few; who having their

Meetings appointed, make not them Clubs of Intemperance and Impiety, but the Encouragement of all that is Pious, Sober, and Edifying; where Cheerfulness or Drink is not excluded, but all restrain'd within such Limits, that while by their innocent Conferences they seek some Diversion, they take Care to prevent all Danger of Excess, and shew their Aversion to the Consequences of it. Where, instead of wasting their Gains, they make Charitable Contributions, as their Circumstances will allow, and draw Blessings on their Families, by their Provision for the Poor. Where, instead of promoting Prophaneness, they banish it from their Meetings, and become Monitors of whatever Failings they observe in each other. This Regularity of these Meetings Illiterate and Working Men, is a Proof that, corrupt as the World is, there may be Recreation without Excess; and that were Men as bold in promoting Virtue and Vice, there might be as many Confraternities for the Encouragement of Moderation and Piety, as there are now Clubs of Sensuality and Intemperance. The question not, but the Exemplarity of these Men will rise up in Judgment against infinite Numbers, to the Confusion of all those Pretexts, by which they excuse

excuſe their Diſorders; and that the Charities they do out of their ſmall Stocks, will be the Condemnation of their ill Management, who being provided with Plenty, without Labor, let their Paſſions defraud the Poor, and ſpend on their Vices, what might be the Relief of the Miſerable.

CHAP. IX.

Inſtructions for Chriſtians, ſubject to Animoſities, Contentions, &c.

THE great Difference there is in Humors and Intereſts, give ſuch frequent Occaſions of Miſunderſtandings, that whoever thinks of wholly declining theſe, muſt quit the World, and all manner of Converſation. Avoiding Enemies is not enough, ſince Friends afford Matter for them; entring into Religion will not do, ſince the moſt Regular Cloyſters are not priviledg'd againſt them. It being therefore in the Power of very few to become ſuch Ermits, as to live in the World, and yet wholly ſeparate from it,

and the Circumſtances of moſt obliging them to Variety of Commerce with it, it becomes a neceſſary Leſſon for the generality of Chriſtians, to learn how to live in the midſt of theſe Occaſions, and not be overcome by them; that is, to meet with endleſs Provocations, and be ſo prepar'd againſt them, as not to admit of Animoſities, nor have any part in any Sinful Contentions.

The Neceſſity of this Leſſon ariſes hence; that Animoſities and Contentions are Paſſions, which blind, or ſo darken the Underſtanding, that it is not capable of judging aright in the Matter before it; but being unhappily byaſs'd by Self-Love, or Intereſt, is expos'd to infinit Miſtakes, in taking all favourable Appearances for certain Truths, and many Suggeſtions of Paſſion, for the Evidence of Reaſon; and hence is in danger of pleading for Frauds and Injuſtice as Lawful, and going on in the Breach of Charity, as in the way of Safety and Peace. Now ſince there is no Degree of Virtue or Learning ſecure againſt theſe miſchievous Effects of Paſſion, if once they open their Breaſts to it, but are in Danger of being led into theſe Precipices, there's a Neceſſity of being provided againſt it.

2dly,

2*dly*, There is another Principal Head of this Neceſſity, becauſe the Duties of Religion, and even thoſe, on which the Grace of God, and our Salvation, very much depend, cannot be duly perform'd, but with a quiet and compos'd Mind; and if this be diſturb'd, all is fill'd with Diſtractions and Tumult: Now there being nothing, that gives greater Diſquiet to the Spirits, than Animoſities, and Contentions, which are ever putting the Soul upon Pleading, Juſtifying, Reproving, Queſtioning, Condemning, and all the Confuſion of the Bar; hence the Chriſtian, who is ſolicitous for the juſt Diſcharge of his greateſt Duties, ſees a Neceſſity of ſhutting out all theſe uneaſie Paſſions, that ſo he may be in Poſſeſſion of himſelf, and in true Liberty of Spirit, be capable of ſatisfying the Obligations of his Character.

Theſe two general Heads, which ſhew the Neceſſity of this Leſſon, if duly conſider'd, furniſh Motives for the Practice of it. For here the Chriſtian ſees the Dangers and Miſchiefs of Animoſities to be ſo great, that whatever Right he pretends to do himſelf, he muſt certainly be a Loſer, in admitting them, and therefore upon a Principle of a very allowable

Self-Love and Intereſt, he muſt ſtand ever prepar'd againſt them.

Upon this Principle of conſulting his own Peace, and doing himſelf no Harm, he may make his Defence againſt all the Occaſions of this Evil: Firſt, In diſſembling, or taking no Notice of what he hears or ſees. Secondly, In ſuppoſing many things to be ſaid and done unadviſedly, without any deſign of that Evil, which they ſeem to carry with them. Thirdly, Of the Perſon being himſelf troubled at what he has thus raſhly ſaid or done, and deſirous of its being paſs'd by in Silence. Fourthly, By not admitting Relations of what others have ſaid of him; and ſuſpecting every Relation of this kind to be far from Truth. Fifthly, By avoiding Poſitiveneſs in all Debates of Indifferent Matters, and ſeeking rather to overcome by yielding, than diſputing. Sixthly, By uſing no manner of provoking Words, and conniving at ſuch Expreſſions in others. Seventhly, By not ſetting up to contradict the Humors of Equals or Betters. Eighthly, By paſſing over whatever humorſome or peeviſh Expreſſions are found in Letters. Ninthly, In never undertaking to Expoſtulate or Reprove, when he is Diſturb'd, or Angry. Tenthly,

ly, By never Reproving upon Suppoſition of a Fault, but after a full Enquiry into the Matter. Eleventhly, By not regarding what belongs to Form only, and Ceremony. Twelfthly, By enquiring, in all Matters of Difference, what Methods can be found for a peaceable Accommodation. Thirteenthly, By conſidering, in Buſineſs of Concern, whether ſetting down, with ſome Loſs, be not more adviſeable, than contending for Right. Fourteenthly, By never letting fall Words, or expreſſing Reſentments before Perſons, who are likely to repeat them to the Party concern'd. Fifteenthly, By not reproving in Publick, what may, with more Hopes of Succeſs, be ſpoke in Private. Laſtly, By endeavoring to meet, in the beginning of any Difference, with the Perſon concern'd, and not let it grow, by giving place to Jealouſies, Miſtakes, and the Indiſcretion of others, who are often Indiſcreetly buſie in ſuch Caſes.

By obſerving theſe Rules in their proper Places, may the Chriſtian preſerve an Interior Peace in all kinds of Provocations, or at leaſt prevent a preſent Diſturbance from growing to a Head. And tho' this cannot be done without Self-denial, in ſuppreſſing the Effects of natural Impatience and Paſſion; yet

upon Consideration, that this is necessary for avoiding the Danger of acting against the Principles of Charity, and of rendring himself uncapable of his greatest Duties, he sees so much of his own Interest in so doing, that he willingly embraces this lesser Difficulty, for the avoiding a greater, and by this Patience, endeavors to be ever in the Possession of his Soul.

Thro' the want of this Care, are occasion'd the infinit Animosities and Differences, which are in the World, and are the great Reproach of that part of it, which is Christian. Men are sensibly touch'd, with every thing, that thwarts their Humor, that crosses their Inclination, that does not answer those nice Punctilio's, which they have set up as the Standard of Respect and Civility; and for want of a little Prudence and Patience, in passing by such ordinary Provocations, they, without Foresight, engage themselves in such troublesome Circumstances, upon pretext of righting themselves, as to destroy all their Inward Peace, and insensibly transgress the Bounds of Piety and Charity, so as to live in the Profession of Christianity, without Charity, which is the Life and Spirit of a Christian. Indiscretion and

Impatience

Impatience are the Roots of all this Evil; thoſe, who are of a Jealous, Exceptious, or Paſſionate Temper, have commonly the greateſt ſhare in it; Wiſdom and Patience ſuffer great Difficulties in theſe Conſtitutions; 'tis hard to be Jealous and Wiſe; 'tis hard to be Patient, where Paſſion governs; there muſt be ſome degree of theſe natural Weakneſſes, in all thoſe, who are ſubject to have frequent Differences with their Neighbors; and without Raſhneſs, it may be judg'd from ſuch Symptoms, there is leſs Wiſdom, and more Paſſion in them, than is agreeable to the Goſpel-Temper.

The Indiſcretion eaſily appears in their ill Management of ordinary Provocations; which, if neglected, like a light Cloud, would ſoon paſs over, and by their buſie Impatience, is improv'd into a Storm. It appears, in their drawing themſelves into great Troubles, by not bearing that, which, at firſt, was but inconſiderable: It appears in bringing upon themſelves the Neceſſity of great Humiliations and Self-denials, for compoſing thoſe Differences, which, by an ordinary Humility, might have been prevented.

And this muſt be the Subject of a ſecond Inſtruction directed to thoſe, who have not been ſo Wiſe, as, by a diſcreet Patience,

Patience, to prevent Miſunderſtandings growing to a Head, but live in profeſs'd Differences with their Neighbor, ſuch as the Spirit and Charity of the Goſpel will not allow. And that theſe may apprehend what their Duty is, they muſt conſult the Spirit of God, and from thence frame a true Judgment of the Circumſtances, in which they are. This will inform them, that ſuch as love not their Neighbor, do not love God, but abide in Death; that the Love of our Neighbor is the Sign and Proof of being Chriſt's Diſciple; that 'tis the fulfilling of the whole Law; that 'tis the beſt Argument of our being tranſlated from Death to Life; that 'tis the expreſs Command of God, and that Salvation cannot be expected by thoſe, who live in the Tranſgreſſion of it. So full is the Sacred Scripture, in declaring the Neceſſity of it, and how great their Crime is, who live not in the Spirit of Charity and Love, that all thoſe, who love not every Neighbor, as is commanded, muſt look upon themſelves as already judg'd; and that whatever Good they otherwiſe do, in Prayer, Faſting and Alms, tho' they ſhould diſtribute all to the Poor, and give their Bodies to be burnt for their Faith in Chriſt, it will avail them nothing; neither can their

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Damnation be otherwiſe prevented, but by making Peace with their Neighbor, and returning to that Duty of Charity, which God indiſpenſibly demands from them.

Thus is their Caſe ſtated by the Spirit of God, ſo that there is no place leſt to flatter themſelves, with the Hopes of doing nothing, but what is juſtifiable, and of being in a ſafe way; but they are in a Neceſſity of making up that Breach, in which they live, and on this Condition only can they be in a Poſſibility of future Happineſs; they muſt either be in Charity with their Neighbor, or elſe never hope to ſee the Face of God. 'Tis the Eternal Decree of God himſelf; and what he has thus commanded, under pain of Damnation, muſt be complied with by as many as deſire to eſcape the Penalty of being for ever Miſerable. And therefore as for all thoſe, who refuſe to compoſe ſuch Differences, as are betwixt them and their Neighbor, 'tis plain, they chuſe to themſelves Damnation; and ſo long they live in this unhappy State, as they live in the Breach of Charity; and for all that time, God will neither hear their Prayers, nor accept any Services from their Hands. How miſerably Blind therefore are all thoſe Chriſtians, who having no Security of their Lives for one

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Moment, venture to live on in this Unhappy State, even the State of Damnation!

But what are thoſe Chriſtians to do, who deſire to compoſe Differences with their Neighbor? They are to do all that, whatever it be, that can be neceſſary and juſt on their parts, for coming to a good Underſtanding, and making up Peace. They are to make whatever Acknowledgments and Satisfactions, Juſtice can require: They are to ſtoop to the greateſt of Humiliations: They are to forgive the greateſt Injuries; they are to connive at the greateſt Affronts; they are to remove all faulty Occaſions of Difference, and not only be in a Diſpoſition of making Peace, whenever the other Parties ſhall require it; but prevent all ſuch Demands, by manifeſting their Deſires of Peace, by making Overtures, and ſoliciting for it.

Nothing of this can be done, without Contradiction, and doing Violence to Nature; eſpecially, where the Fault ſeems to be on the other ſide, and their Unworthineſs or Malice, renders them undeſerving of all ſuch Compliance. But however undeſerving they are, it muſt be done. Heaven is to be purchas'd by many Self-denials; 'tis a general Rule, and here there can be no Exemption.

If

If the Parties are unworthy, and deſerve it not, Chriſtians are to do it for their own ſakes, for their Salvation, and in reſpect to him, who commands it, and ſubmit to many Contradictions in their Behalf, whoſe Sins had made them unworthy of ſuch Mercies. God therefore is to be regarded in all ſuch Humiliations; Heaven is to be conſider'd in ſuch preventing Condeſcentions; they are to be look'd on, as part of thoſe Trials, which however great, yet bear no Proportion with that Glory, which God has prepar'd for thoſe, who are Faithful in their Duty to him. He has taught us, that to ſhew Expreſſions of Love to thoſe only, who are our Friends, is no more than the Heathen, Publican or Phariſees do; and that there is no Entrance into Heaven, for thoſe, who exceed not the Juſtice of the Scribes and Phariſees. The Unworthineſs therefore of others is to be no Barr to our Duty; we are to do what God requires, whether they deſerve it from our Hands or no. He commands us to Love, to be in Charity with, to Pray for, to do Good to all; and if ſome, by their perverſe Temper, or by the ill Offices they do, raiſe in us a diſlike, or even render us averſe to their ways; yet this Averſion of Nature is not to withdraw us from the Obedience we

owe

owe to God; his Law ought ſtill to prevail in our Hearts, and his Command of Loving, and doing Good to ſuch Neighbors, is to take place of all thoſe Arguments, which Nature ſuggeſts in their Diſfavor: Otherwiſe, we cannot be the Children of our Father, who is in Heaven, but the Diſciples only of the Old Man, in following that Corruption, which is the Inheritance of Sin. If then, there are ſome, who Revile, Perſecute, and Hate us, and are our profeſs'd Enemies, the Will of God is ſtill to be our Rule, in regard of them; we are to Love, and do Good to them, becauſe God demands it of us, and has declar'd it neceſſary for our Eternal Good.

This is the Law and the Goſpel, and every Chriſtian, by his Profeſſion, undertaking to obſerve it, ſees in this, what he has to do; he is to preſerve Charity, whatever it Coſts him, and muſt omit no ſort of Expedients for the recovery of it, if it be loſt. He muſt treat Enemies as Friends, and by all Expreſſions of Reſpect, and Arguments of Good-will, labor to Convince thoſe concern'd, of his ſincere Deſires of Peace and a good Correſpondence. He muſt not, in compoſing Differences, attend either to the Dictates of Pride, or the Common Sentiments of the World; both theſe concur in their

Objections

Objections againſt all kinds of Condeſcendence and Invitations to Peace. They repreſent it as Mean, to ſtoop to ſuch, as deſerve it not; that 'tis Diſhonorable not to reſent Injuries; that if Differences are to be made up, thoſe ought to ſue for it, who have been the Aggreſſors in the Provocations given: Thus Pride, Corruption, and all their Abettors, plead againſt Charity, and Encourage the keeping open whatever Breach has been made in it.

But the good Chriſtian is not to regard ſuch Arguments, nor frame his Judgment of what is Mean or Honorable by the falſe Weights of the World: He has made Choice of another Maſter, and from him muſt take all his Meaſures. And ſince he has inform'd him both by Word and Example, that the things, which the World undervalues as Contemptible and Fooliſh, are moſt Valuable in the Sight of God, and the very things, which he has choſen, he muſt let this be the Rule of his Conduct; and hence be ever mindful, that what the World calls Honorable, in reſenting Injuries, is to be ſet down as Fooliſh, in the Chriſtian's Scheme; and what the World diſeſteems as Mean, in Humbly and Charitably inviting the Undeſerving to Peace, is to be valued by him

as moſt Honorable: And that therefore when Miſunderſtandings and Contentions are to be remov'd, he is not to conſider either his own Innocence, or the Degree he has in the World, or the Unworthineſs or Provocations of the Adverſe Party; but only what are the moſt Effectual Means for a Reconciliation; and remember, that 'tis the Argument and Duty of the Beſt Chriſtian, to make the firſt Overtures towards it. This Humiliation or Stooping is moſt Honorable, becauſe it has a near Reſemblance with the Charity of God, and is a Participation of a Divine Excellency, which ought to be moſt deſirable to a Chriſtian. 'Tis moſt Advantageous to him, becauſe his greateſt Intereſt being in obtaining the Mercy of God, he can have no more Effectual Way for this, than in being thus Charitable to his Neighbor.

And in Caſe, thro' an unuſual Obſtinacy on the other ſide, his Endeavors prove ineffectual, he has ſtill this Comfort of having ſatisfied his Duty, and that he has no part in whatever Differences are yet kept up: Tho', to ſecure this his inward Peace, he muſt not be contented once to have made the Offer of a Reconciliation, but even after a Repulſe, ought to continue in the like peaceable Diſpoſition, and give Demonſtrations of it by

by expreſſing it to Friends, and tempering both his Words and Carriage with Freedom and Reſpect, as often as the other Party is Witneſs of what he does. This is a Method will ſoften by degrees the hardeſt Nature, and therefore is not to be omitted by ſuch, as ſincerely deſire to ſatisfie what is due to Chriſtian Charity.

The want of this ſettled Diſpoſition brings often Peace into Deſpair, whilſt Chriſtians ſeeing their friendly Offers receiv'd with Scorn, ſeem now to conclude, they have done their Duty, and are diſpenc'd from the Obligation of making any farther Attempts; nay, that the Difference now is juſtifiable on their part at leaſt, and that if they take a Liberty in deſcanting upon the other's perverſneſs, 'tis no more than what they can Anſwer. But how will they Anſwer it, when knowing their ill Temper, they, by ſuch Diſcourſes, left to the Indiſcretion of Second and Third Hands, give them daily Occaſions of being more Exaſperated, and thus, for being once diſappointed, put all beyond Recovery? 'Tis very Commendable, for the taking off Scandal, to acquaint Friends with their own good Deſires, and the Propoſals they have made for coming to a better underſtanding; and if they would expreſs the Continuance of the ſame Diſpoſition,

poſition, it would be ſtill better; but to let fall ſuch Words, as, when related, will infallibly gaul, this cannot be a proper Expedient for Peace, eſpecially in regard, of thoſe, whoſe uneaſie Temper makes a Reconciliation very difficult.

This Caution has not only place here in Healing of Differences, but is likewiſe ſtrictly to be obſerv'd in their very firſt Appearance and the Progreſs of them. Miſunderſtandings cannot be always prevented even by thoſe, who are moſt watchful in what they ſay and do. But in this Point is the great Difference betwixt thoſe, who are Wiſe, and others, who are not ſo: The former being careful never to expreſs their Reſentments, or at leaſt, not to ſuch, who can be ſuſpected as likely to repeat them again; and when they have other Perſons Witneſſes of their Diſcourſe, take occaſion to make an Honorable mention of the other Parties concern'd, putting the beſt Conſtruction on whatever miſtakes have happen'd, and thus, by Second Hands, deſignedly prepare them for Peace. But others, whoſe Indiſcretion makes them leſs Cautious, before all Company make known their Aggrievance, and juſtifying themſelves, lay all the Blame on the other ſide, and in this chuſe many for Confiden-

ſidents, whoſe Goſſiping Humor renders them incapable of keeping a Secret; by this means, whatever they ſay, is officiouſly related again; and that, which, if ſtifled or diſſembled, would have been nothing, now by others help grows into a Quarrel, and by not ſeeing one another, and ſuppoſing all they hear to be exact, often becomes endleſs. This is the Effect of ill Management, and there is no avoiding the Conſequence, but by being more Wiſe in preventing the Occaſion.

Q. *But how are Differences to be made up, when all ſuppoſe right to be on their Side?*

A. If the Parties concern'd have any tolerable degree of Diſcretion, there can never want ways of coming to Peace, if there be but Charity enough to deſire it. Such will give great Allowances, on Conſideration of ſo great a Good, and rather ſtrive to overcome by yielding, than ſtand out upon Terms. They will ſet down a great deal to Miſtake, Overſight, or Surprize; and what will not fall under theſe Heads, they will readily forgive, both becauſe 'tis generous, and the part of a great Mind, and becauſe the Faith they profeſs teaches them to do ſo. And if there be any Concern of Juſtice, they will take Advice with the moſt Prudent, how far it may be reaſonable to yield. The

The greater Difficulty is with ſuch as are Indiſcreet and Weak; for theſe being not capable of thoſe Motives, which prevail on others, ſtand ſo ſtiff in their own Thoughts, and ſo very nice in what they apprehend as juſt, that they can think of no Reconciliation, but on their own Terms. If they are brought Face to Face, nothing appears, but Violence and Paſſion, ſuch as wholly obſcure the Truth, and render it impoſſible for any Friend to compoſe the Difference. And hence there is ſeldom any thing can be done, except only by obliging them to ſilence, and never to enter into any farther Debate of the Matter betwixt them. This too will be difficult, becauſe 'tis like giving up their Right; but when the Subject of the Diſpute is little more than of Words, it muſt be thus ended; let them be made ſenſible, how great is the Sin and Scandal of living without Charity, by which they are excluded from the Mercy of God, and the Participation of his Sacraments; and if there be any Senſe of Eternity amongſt them, it may be hop'd, this Conſideration will prevail, for yielding to what is propos'd.

Q. *If a Chriſtian has been in Enmity with others, does not he ſatisfie his Duty to Charity, if he forgives them?*

A.

A. If he ſincerely forgives them from his Heart, as the Goſpel directs, it cannot be queſtion'd; but if he only profeſſes this with his Lips, and ſtill finds the Ulcer at his Heart, this is mocking the Precept, inſtead of fulfilling it? And this he is to ſuſpect, if upon ordinary Occaſions, he is ever ready to expreſs his Reſentments of the Injuries receiv'd; if he be deliberately pleas'd with the ill Opinion others have of them; if he rejoices in their Misfortunes, and puts the worſt Conſtruction on what they do; if he cannot ſee them, but with Diſturbance, and complies not with the uſual Marks of Civility. Upon obſerving theſe ill Symptoms, he has reaſon to be jealous of himſelf, and fear, that however he pretends to have forgiven what is paſt, it is not ſincerely from his Heart, ſince all theſe are evident Signs of an Interior Diſorder; and therefore he muſt not think, he has ſatisfied his Duty to Charity, but ought to take good Advice, how to do that to the Purpoſe, which will allow of no Deceit, but to his own Ruin.

Q. *How far does Charity oblige him to go, in regard of thoſe who have been, or are his Enemies?*

A. The

A. The Goſpel obliges the Chriſtian to love his Enemies; this Precept is in a Matter, which all underſtand ſo well, that one would think, there could be no neceſſity of Expounding it; and yet Corruption has found ſo many favourable Notions, that the Expoſition of it cannot be excus'd.

This Precept, then obliges the Chriſtian to that common, or general Love, which excludes all Hatred, Anger, and Ill-will; ſo that the worſt of Enemies muſt not be excepted in thoſe Prayers, wherein he deſires God to have Mercy on, Bleſs and Save all Chriſtians; he muſt not in Word or Action do them any Prejudice, nor in his Heart deliberately deſire it, but muſt be ever in a Diſpoſition of giving them Aſſiſtance, both Spiritually and Temporally, if his Help be neceſſary for them. Whatever is leſs than this, comes ſhort of that Charity, which the Goſpel preſcribes. And therefore, as for thoſe mention'd above, who ſay, they have forgiven all Injuries, and yet, upon all Occaſions, are ever ready to give him concern'd an ill Word, and do him ill Offices, and this with Reflection; 'tis plain they deceive themſelves, and are wanting in their Duty; ſince none can do this to Perſons whom they love.

Q. But

Q. *But, how can he love thoſe, in whom he ſees nothing worthy of Love; nothing but Corruption, Malice and Vice?*

A. Theſe Evils cannot be lov'd by the good Chriſtian, and yet while he hates the Diſorders, to which they are ſubject, he may ſtill have ſuch a Love for their Perſons, as to wiſh them well, and deſire to do them all poſſible Good. See, how a good Mother hating the Vices of an Extravagant Son, ſtill preſerves her Love towards him, and daily expreſſes it in her Prayers and Tears, and in her Endeavors of Reclaiming him. This was the Love of *David* to *Abſalom*, and of S. *Monica* to her Son *Auguſtin*. Now as Parents, notwithſtanding the Vices of their Children, ſtill retain their Love; ſo may Brethren too to one another, and all Chriſtians being Brethren, God has oblig'd them to maintain this Mutual Love: And there are ſufficient Motives to retain it. For as 'tis ſufficient for Parents to love their Children under all Circumſtances, becauſe they are ſtill the Children of their Bowels; and for Brethren, becauſe they are of the ſame Fleſh: So it ought to be ſufficient for Chriſtians to preſerve a Love towards all;

becauſe, whatever their Diſorders be, they are ſtill the Work of God's Infinit Power and Goodneſs, made to his own Likeneſs, redeem'd by the Blood of Chriſt, Members of the ſame Myſtical Body, ſtill capable of the Divine Mercy, and of being made living Members of the Hevenly *Jeruſalem*. Theſe Conſiderations can never be ſo wholly ſtifled, as not to deſerve their Love; what Men do in themſelves, may be juſtly hated, but what God has done in them, is ſtill worthy of their Love. And ſince God has created them for Eternal Happineſs, and united Chriſtians in one Body, and one common Intereſt, no particular Unworthineſs ought to exclude them from having a part in thoſe Deſires and Helps, which may be ſerviceable, for the accompliſhing the Deſign of Heaven in their Creation and Redemption.

As therefore in the Courts of Princes Intereſt and Dependance make many diſſemble Affronts, and treat thoſe with the greateſt Expreſſions of Honor, whom they truly hate: So, upon better Motives, are Chriſtians to do; if there be any, whoſe Injuſtice or Malice raiſes their Averſion, they muſt let the Arguments of their Eternal Intereſt prevail ſo far as all ſuch Motions, as to ſuppreſs the

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quite, as to all Appearance, and never permit them to carry the Soul beyond thoſe Bounds, which God has ſet them. And this is to preſcribe no more, than that General and Eternal Motives ſhould over-rule all ſuch, as are Private, and only Temporal; and that while the Soul feels the Suggeſtions of Corruption, it ſhould not yield to theſe, but make Choice of better for its Conduct: Thus it muſt do in all other Caſes, where Inclination leads to Evil; and if it obſerves not here this Rule, it muſt not pretend to Virtue.

It being then a general Duty for all to Pray for all, and to be ready to afford Help, whenever Neceſſity demands it, particular Conſiderations muſt not make Exceptions againſt what God has thus eſtabliſh'd by an Eternal Law; but whatever theſe be, they muſt yield to the Order of God, and that muſt be done, which he preſcribes, tho' Nature be Averſe to it. The Rule then muſt be follow'd, which *Moſes* and *Samuel* practis'd towards the People of *Iſrael*: The former was exaſperated againſt them, becauſe of the Golden Calf they had made for their God; the latter, becauſe they had contemn'd him and God, and demanded a King to be put over them; and yet

under theſe Provocations they both expreſs a great Solicitude for their Good, and earneſtly petition God in their Behalf: Forgive, ſays *Moſes*, this People their Sin, or blot me out of the Book of Life. Far be it from me, ſays *Samuel*, that I ſhould ceaſe to pray for you. Their Anger proves no Barr to their Duty, and they ſtill continue Zealous for the People's Good, tho' they find their Hearts exaſperated againſt them. Chriſtians know how to do this, in regard of thoſe, who have ſinned againſt God; the Conſideration of ſuch Unhappineſs raiſes their Compaſſion and Zeal, and they have no Difficulty, in contributing to their Amendment, both by Counſel and Prayers. All Chriſtians ought to do ſo, in regard of thoſe, who have Provok'd or Injur'd them: Such Offences are not to ſhut ſuch Perſons out from having a part in their good Deſires and Prayers; ſuch Offences ought not more to ſtreighten their Bowels, than others Offences committed againſt God. The general Duty of Praying for, and Doing Good to all, muſt prevail upon thoſe private Conſiderations, and God's Law muſt not be made void, becauſe of ſuch *Caveats* from Inclination. Thus far Charity obliges all Chriſtians to do, in reſpect of their greateſt

greateſt Enemies, and there's no Power on Earth can diſpence with them in theſe Duties, which God has laid on them; and whenever Paſſion undertakes it, 'tis by a Uſurpt Authority, ſuch as will never be acknowledg'd as Legitimate.

CHAP. X.

Inſtructions for Chriſtians, ſubject to the Vice of Detraction.

THE firſt Remedy of this Evil, muſt be from the Conſideration of its being contrary to that Rule of Charity, which being dictated by Nature, is confirm'd by Chriſt in the Goſpel, of not doing to others, what we would not have others do to us. A ſhort Reflection on that great Niceneſs we all have, in whatever concerns our Reputation, is ſufficient to inform all conſidering Chriſtians, what their Practice ought to be in this Point, and that they cannot ſay any thing, that is a leſſening to their Neighbor, but 'tis a Tranſgreſſion of this Rule,

in doing to others, what they would not have others do to them. And then, if in making up their Accompts by the Direction of the Goſpel, they find this to be a Violation of Charity, and that the Breach of Charity is equivalent to the Tranſgreſſion of the whole Law, ſuch as is not conſiſtent with the Grace and Love of God, they muſt preſently diſcover, that living in the Practice of Detraction, is living an Enemy to God, and in a State, which can have no Hopes of Inheriting the Promiſes. Now to Chriſtians, that have a Senſe of Eternity, and a Deſire of Salvation, what ſtronger Motive can they have, of avoiding any Practice, than the Aſſurance of its being Damnable, and that whatever they do, in order to Eternity, can find no Acceptance with God, if this Obſtacle be not remov'd, which excludes them from all the Mercies of Heaven? To labor therefore in all the uſual Exerciſes of Piety, as earneſtly deſiring to be Happy, and yet go on in this ill Cuſtom without Scruple, is ſo very abſurd, that it muſt be the Effect of a great Blindneſs, and can have no Parallel, but in the unaccountable State of the *Iſraelites*, in worſhipping God and Idols too.

A Second Remedy, tho' one would think, it needed it not, may be in conſidering the Conſequence of this Evil, which by a ſort of peculiar Priviledge in Iniquity, renders Pardon more difficult, and Repentance more ineffectual to the Offender, than in any other common Sin whatever. The Reaſon is, becauſe of the great Difficulty, in making Reſtitution for the Injury done to the Perſon, whoſe Reputation has been blemiſh'd by the Detractor. 'Tis a receiv'd Maxim, approv'd by S. *Auguſtin*, that a Sin is not forgiven, except that be reſtor'd, which was taken away: If this be the Condition of Pardon, how can it be expected in a Caſe, where there ſcarce appears a Probability of ſuch a Reſtitution? For when a Perſon is once defam'd, and a Scandal has taken Air, who is there, that knows the Talkative Humor of People, can contrive a way, to prevent its ſpreading, or for changing their Opinion, who have already receiv'd the Impreſſion? Gunpowder may be as well confin'd, that has taken Fire, or a Reſtraint put upon the Sea, when the Banks are broken down. For a Scandal once publiſh'd, thro' the Malicious or Indiſcreet Temper of People, ſpreads beyond all Poſſibility of Recovery. Who then is there, that has faln

into this perplexing Guilt, can make Reſtitution for the Injury done? And if no Forgiveneſs can be expected, but on this Condition, of reſtoring what has been taken away, who can ſeparate the Guilt from Deſpair? This is the frightful Character of this Sin, taken from the Principles of S. *Auguſtin*, enough to terrifie any thinking Chriſtian; for ſince all our Comfort is in the Hopes of Mercy and Pardon, what muſt the Anguiſh of a poor Soul be, when looking on himſelf, he ſees his Sins, like that of deſpairing *Cain*, or thoſe againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which ſhall not be forgiven, either in this World, or in the World to come?

'Tis true, there may be a more favorable Reaſoning; for if a Chriſtian, under this Guilt, be ſenſible of the Injury he has done, is ſincerely griev'd at it; and tho' he cannot make a full Reparation, is yet ready to do whatever lies in his Power, and is poſſible to him, may there not be ſomething more favorably pronounc'd of it, and even Hopes of Pardon allow'd; becauſe, God, who ſees the Heart, will accept of the Repentance, according to the Sincerity of ſuch Deſires, and not charge that as a ſinful Omiſſion, which is render'd impoſſible to him? Yet when this is concluded, and nothing

is wanting of Mercy on the part of Heaven; where are thoſe ſo truly Penitent Chriſtians, as will ſubmit to the Humiliation of doing what lies in their Power for Reparation of the Wrong done? How few are they, who, having rais'd or publiſh'd a Scandal, will be perſwaded to proclaim their own Malice or Raſhneſs, for the clearing their injur'd Neighbor? This is the only thing they can do, and having it in their Power, Juſtice obliges them to do it. But who will do it? This Reſtitution is render'd ſo difficult by Pride, that it may be reckon'd within few Degrees of Impoſſible. And what then will it avail, if God's Mercy be ready to Pardon, if the Offender be not ready to comply with what is requir'd on his part? This is in Suppoſition of the Scandal publiſh'd, being a Forgery. But if it be in a Matter of Truth, what then can he do? He cannot then own it as the Invention of his Malice; for this would be falſe, and it is not allowable, to make a Lie the Remedy of Detraction: And whatever other Way he can take, 'tis more likely to widen, than heal, the Wound he has made, in rendring it more obſervable. And is he then excus'd from making Reſtitution, becauſe it cannot be done? If this were ſo, he

might ſoon come to Peace of Conſcience; but it ſeems to be far otherwiſe; for having injur'd his Neighbor, the Obligation of making Reſtitution is annex'd to the Sin; the Obligation then remains, even, when he has no Means for ſatisfying it. A perplext Caſe; but who has brought him into theſe Streights? If it be thro' his own Fault, muſt not he be anſwerable for it? Theſe are the unhappy Circumſtances of this Sin, whether in Matter of Falſhood or Truth; it carries the Sinner upon a Rock, which threatens an almoſt certain Shipwrack; and if there be any Hopes of eſcaping, it is ſo very uncertain, that I think, no Chriſtian, that has any Concern for coming at length to his Port, will ever put his Soul in this Hazard.

Theſe Two Conſiderations preſs with their whole weight on thoſe, who puſh'd on by a ſecret Grudge, or profeſs'd Malice, ſpeak ſuch things of their Neighbor, as muſt neceſſarily blemiſh the Reputation he has in the World, and render him Infamous. And here let thoſe ſee, how far they may be concern'd, who without poſitively deſigning to prejudice their Neighbor, are ever forward, in relating whatever Paſſages they hear of others, tho' often very much in their Diſfavor;

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and if the Subject of the Diſcourſe be of ſuch Perſons, to whom, thro' Envy, or ſome Difference, they are any thing Averſe; here ſpare nothing, that can be ſaid, but Cenſoriouſly Reprove, inveigh with Bitterneſs, and give a Turn to every thing, ſuch as is moſt agreeable to their own prejudic'd Minds, but little favorable to thoſe, who are the Subject of the Entertainment.

Theſe, I ſay, ought to ſee, how far they are concern'd; for ſince the Good or Ill Opinion we have of others, is generally fram'd from the Impreſſions we receive, 'tis very likely this is the Effect of all ſuch Diſcourſes, and that nothing is related in Diſfavor of any, but it leaves ſuitable Impreſſions, and the Hearers, tho' they ſay nothing, have their Sentiments conform'd to ſuch Relations. This is certainly ſo, if the Perſon that ſpeaks, has any Authority with the Hearers, and they have an Opinion of his Sincerity and Judgment; for ſuch an one cannot let fall a Word, that is any ways leſſening to others, but it is laid up, as a certain Character, and nothing ſhall be afterwards eſteem'd true, but what is agreeable to it. Theſe therefore have a particular Obligation of examining this Point, and others are not to be excus'd from it.

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The Reaſons for examining it, are,

Firſt, Becauſe, if by their deſign'd or unadvis'd Diſcourſes, others ſuffer in their Reputation, they then offend againſt Charity; and this being of the greateſt Concern to Chriſtians, no Cuſtom ought to be allow'd, which is likely to entrench upon it.

Secondly, Becauſe in all ſuch Relations, there is Danger of offending againſt Juſtice: For whoever conſiders the general Weakneſs of Men, in ſuiting whatever they report to their own Inclinations or Affections, and by this Byaſs, either Magnifying or Diminiſhing what they ſay, and even Inſerting their own Conſtructions for Matter of Fact, will from hence find ſufficient Grounds for ſuſpecting the Truth of whatever they hear; and therefore, as often as they relate again, what they have heard of others, muſt ſee in this a great Raſhneſs, in venturing to report for a Truth, which very likely has not Truth in a Third Part of it. And if the Subject be in the Concern of another's Reputation, where can be the Juſtice of it?

Whoever has had but Memory enough to compare Reports with the Truth, which has afterwards been diſcover'd, muſt have ſeen enough to make him Jealous:

But for the Unexperienc'd, let them conſider what they muſt have read or heard in the Book of *Kings*. *Abſalom* had kill'd *Amnon* at an Entertainment, at which were preſent all the King's Sons: And what is the Report brought to *David*? That all the King's Sons were ſlain. Again, in the New-Teſtament Chriſt had ſaid in the Hearing of his Apoſtles, concerning S. *John*, *If I will have him abide, till I come, what is that to thee?* And what was the Report amongſt the Brethren, occaſion'd by theſe Words? They relate it, as the Saying of Chriſt, that S. *John* was not to die. In this Inſtance may be ſeen the Weakneſs, even of good Men, in relating their own Conſtructions for Matter of Fact, and in the other, the Vanity or Raſhneſs of Reports; and by theſe may be gueſs'd the Exactneſs all other common Reports have with Truth; for certainly, could the Accompt be made up, there would ſcarce be found One in Ten, but what would deſervedly fall under the Scandal of being very unlike the Truth; eſpecially in the Point of Reputation, where Envy, Malice, Vanity and Raſhneſs, are ever ready with their Pencils to lay on Colors, and after ſo much Practice, have never yet been able to draw any thing to the Life. As to

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reporting therefore any thing upon Hearſay, which ſeems Prejudicial to others, there is ſuch an evident Hazard of Injuſtice, in doing it, that a wiſe Man cannot attempt it, without the Cenſure of being too Credulous; nor a good Man, but by forfeiting his Claim to that Character.

There is but little more Security in reporting what a Perſon hears or ſees himſelf; for beſides this being a greater Offence againſt Charity, in making ſtronger Impreſſions, by the Authority of certain Knowledge, which it carries with it; there is likewiſe a great Hazard of offending againſt Juſtice and Truth. For ſince the Good and Evil of every Action depend very much on the Motives, Intention, and particular Conſiderations, which carry on him, that does it; and theſe are generally hid from us, tho' we can poſitively ſay, ſuch an one did this, becauſe we were Witneſſes; yet when we come to deſcant on the Morality of the Action, and condemn the Perſon as guilty of ſuch a Folly, Sin or Imprudence; here we may eaſily be unjuſt Judges, and cenſure Innocence as Guilty. For how can we pretend to paſs an equitable Sentence in any Affair, if we have never had it truly ſtated, but underſtand

derſtand it only by halves? There muſt be Raſhneſs in ſuch an Undertaking; and if by ſuch a Verdict, is to be determin'd any Buſineſs of Concern, he that is ſo bold as to give it, may eaſily favor what is Unjuſt; and if ever he comes to have a Senſe of what he has done, muſt make Satisfaction for the Wrong. This Hazard is generally in all thoſe Caſes, wherein we undertake not only to relate Matter of Fact, but to give our Opinion of it, and cenſure Perſons according to our own Sentiments, which cannot be excus'd from being Raſh, becauſe we are ſeldom duly inform'd of thoſe particular Circumſtances, on which the Morality of the Action principally depends: All then we can generally ſay with Truth, is, that ſuch a thing was ſaid or done; but to pronounce farther, muſt be with the hazard of Injuſtice. This we often experience in many things touching our ſelves; and while we ſee People ſo often miſtaking what we do, 'tis ſomething ſurprizing, that this Reflection does not make Chriſtians more cautious in what they pronounce of others.

And if we ſuppoſe ſome Caſes however, wherein we have a full Evidence of all Circumſtances, there may be ſtill an Injuſtice in the Relation, by making Impreſſions,

preſſions, tho' moſt ſuitable to what we have ſeen. For if a Perſon has ſaid or done what was really Evil in it ſelf, and Sinful in him, and upon Reflection, has ſincerely humbled himſelf before God, and heartily repented of the Evil, muſt it not be unjuſt, to deſcribe him under the Diſorder and Guilt of Sin, when thro' his Repentance, he is now juſtified in the Sight of God? When Heaven is now rejoicing in his Converſion, muſt not Earth be Unjuſt, in repreſenting him a Sinner, and painting him under all that Deformity, which now has no Being? Again, if a Perſon has ſaid or done an Imprudent thing, and from the Relation of it, is deſcrib'd under the diſadvantageous Colors of Raſhneſs or Indiſcretion, which is often very prejudicial; may there not be in this a great Injuſtice, ſince it often happens, that Perſons from the Obſervation of ſuch Overſights in themſelves, learn to be more Cautious and Wiſe, and are ſo far from being Worſe for what is paſt, that they are conſiderably better for it? This is often an Advantage Chriſtians make of their Failings, in Point of Virtue and Diſcretion, and their greateſt Improvement is from the Experience and Inſtruction of ſuch Weakneſſes. Whilſt therefore the

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World keeping a Record of ſuch Failings, and rating the Value of Perſons accordingly, without taking Notice of the Advantage made of them, in ſo doing, uſes very deceitful Weights and Meaſures; there are none, who follow the ſame Method, and, upon the Confidence of what they have heard and ſeen, undertake to give Characters of Perſons anſwerable to ſuch their Obſervations, but what put too much weight of Truth, upon a Foundation, that will not bear it, and under the Preſumption of Evidence, are often in Danger of being very Unjuſt.

Now there being ſo many Difficulties in this Subject of ſpeaking of our Neighbor's Failings, that ſuch Diſcourſes are generally the Violation of our Fundamental Duties, and often draw us into ſuch a Guilt, that we are uncapable of ſatisfying for the Wrong we do, and put us almoſt beyond the Hopes of Pardon; ought not all Chriſtians, who are concern'd for a future State, ſet a Mark upon this Vice, as upon a Rock of Scandal, and be Solicitous, in avoiding it, for fear of Shipwrack? Ought not they to fix ſome Rules, relating to this Matter, for their ſafer Conduct, in a Way ſo very Nice, and where the Concern is of ſo great Importance?

And

And *Firſt*, Reſolve not to make ſuch Diſcourſes the Subject of their common Entertainments; becauſe theſe being Daily, and almoſt Hourly, and ſuch as muſt continue all their Lives, whoever is ſo little Circumſpect, as to let theſe be the Occaſions of Sin, will always live in the Occaſions of Sin. Now this muſt be a great Unhappineſs; for tho' in this State, we cannot be always remote from Danger; yet when our Circumſtances come to be ſo, that our Common Entertainments, and Ordinary Recreations, are the Occaſions of Sin, ſo as to be generally Criminal, what can be more dreaded by a Chriſtian? Is not this to play with Monſters, and to make Lap-dogs of Lions or Bears? A Sport one would think too deſperate for thoſe, who Love themſelves, or are of a Fearful Temper. And is it not then ſurprizing, that thoſe, who come neareſt to this Conſtitution, ſhould generally pleaſe themſelves in a Diverſion, which is ſo very prejudicial, and has ſo much of Terror in it, that 'tis enough to awe the Boldeſt, and keep them at a diſtance?

2*dly*, Not to make ſuch Diſcourſes the Argument of the greateſt Friendſhip. 'Tis a Practice too common: For many who, in mixt Company, know how, by

keep a Reſtraint upon their Lips, when they meet a Friend alone, then to take greater Freedom, and give Proof of their more than ordinary Confidence, by diſcharging their Breaſts of all they know, by diſcovering their Jealouſies, and opening ſuch Secrets, which Nature and Charity obliges them to conceal. 'Tis in ſuch Corner-Committees are whiſper'd over the Faults, and Indiſcretions of their beſt Acquaintance, Suſpicions are confirm'd, and Probabilities are made Demonſtrations; and that Friendſhip, which gives the Confidence, permits nothing to be queſtion'd of whatever is related; but the ſuppos'd Obligation of Flattering one another, makes them act, as if they had no other Friend in the World. 'Tis plain, how much Friendſhip is abus'd in this Point: For the Principal, and only Chriſtian Deſign of it, being to give mutual Help to one another in all that is Good, and eſpecially in ſuch a way, as may contribute to Salvation; here all is turn'd the wrong way, and it ſerves for nothing, but to make them hide each others Faults, and lay open their Neighbors, which is not helping to Save, but to Damn one another.

3*dly*, Not

3*dly*, Not to let the Pretext of Compassion and Piety make way for Detraction. 'Tis another Practice too general, especially amongst such as seem to have a Concern for Eternity. Their Conscience is not so harden'd, as downright to publish their Neighbor's Crimes, and yet the Itch of doing it is so very strong that they know not how to contain. Therefore Piety is call'd in, and the Devil is painted over with its Colors; they make a Sanctified Preamble, of the great Concern they are in for the Scandal such an one has given; that they are heartily sorry for his Rashness, and hope some of the Company may be able to give him Advice; and then, after such a Preface, they, without scruple, dissect him upon the Board, and lay open whatever secret Disorders can blast his Reputation. But this is an Abuse of Piety, and Hypocrisie, instead of Compassion: for had they any true Concern for such a Neighbor, they would not add Infamy to his Sin, and by pointing at his Deformity, expose him to the World. 'Tis true, there may be Cases, wherein Charity may discover Faults to a Parent or Superior, to oblige them to be more Watchful in their Charge: But this is so often abus'd, and made a Cover, to usher

in the worſt of Detractions, that I think Chriſtians have Reaſon to ſet a Mark upon it, that they be not miſled by ſuch Shews of Piety.

An ordinary Obſervation will teach the ſerious Chriſtian many other Leſſons of this kind; and having duly conſider'd the weight of this Sin, with the frequent Occaſions of falling into it, oblige him to come to a Reſolution of never beginning, or joining in any Diſcourſe, which has the Sins of the Abſent for its Subject. For tho' all ſuch Converſation may not be equally Sinful, eſpecially, when Crimes being now public, there can be no Danger of leſſening Reputation, by ſpeaking of them; yet becauſe he has Reaſon to ſuſpect, that, even when there is no Danger of Detraction, yet the Satisfaction in ſuch Diſcourſe may ariſe from a ſecret Complacence, either in the Evil related, or as it belongs to ſuch a Neighbor, hence he may look on it as indulging of his own corrupt Inclination, tho' it be not hurtful to others. 2*dly*, Becauſe the Cuſtom of diſcourſing of others Indiſcretions and Sins, ſuch, as being public, carry no Detraction with them, will by degrees make him leſs cautious in his Words, and lead into other Matters, which are defamatory.

3*dly*,

3*dly*, Becauſe all ſuch Diſcourſe entrenches generally upon Charity, in doing to others, as he would not have others do to him: For who can be pleas'd, in having his Infamy made the Subject of a common Entertainment? 4*thly*, Becauſe 'tis neither Honorable, or Becoming the Chriſtian Profeſſion, to make his Neighbor's Misfortunes the Subject of his Paſtime. 5*thly*, Becauſe, were there no Evil in ſuch Diſcourſe, yet he thinks it to be a Part of his Concern, not only to abſtain from what is Evil, but to do Good and to ſee, that even his common Entertainments be worthy of his Profeſſion. And how many things are there of this kind, in which Chriſtians might be helpful to one another? And if any Failings are to be brought on the Board, why not their own, that they may be made more ſenſible of them, and inform'd of Remedies? Why not of ſuch as are preſent in a Charitable and Friendly manner, that may be for their Inſtruction? If this were once Faſhionable, the meeting of Friends would be more to the Purpoſe than at preſent it is. And if our Pride and Self-Love will not allow of this, why ſhould they make bold with the Abſent, and treat them in ſuch a manner, as, if preſent, they know, they

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would not bear? For these and other such Reasons, he thinks it a Christian Resolution never to engage in any Discourse of his Neighbor's Sins, because 'tis generally either Sinful, or very Dangerous, or Unbecoming the Sanctity of his Profession, or Prejudicial to himself, if it be not to others, and cannot fail of giving ill Example.

And as he is careful, not to engage in it, so he is equally Solicitous, not to give any Encouragement to that part of it, at least; which being defamatory, he knows to be Sinful; and therefore, if he be one of the Company, instead of setting it forward, by asking Questions, by Smiles, or Nods, he endeavors to discountenance it by his Silence, by severe Looks, by interrupting it with some more Commendable Subject, and sometimes by an unexpected withdrawing: And if the Company be such, as will bear it, puts it by with a deserved Reproof. This he does, because he is sensible, that whoever willingly gives Ear to a Detractor, is equally Criminal with him.

In both these Parts then, the Christian ought to be very careful, that is, in governing both his Tongue and his Ears, as to whatever concerns the Reputation of his Neighbor; because of the continual

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Occaſions of falling into this Evil, and of the great Provocations to it, above all other Sins; in as much as it is the Practice of ſuch Chriſtians, whoſe Piety and Exemplarity being remarkable, take off all Scandal from this Vice, and ſeem enough to perſwade People of its being Innocent. This carries a ſtrong Infection with it; and 'tis hard for the greateſt number to think that Vicious, which thoſe of the firſt Rank, and beſt Character, ſeem to do, without ſcruple. Upon this Conſideration 'tis neceſſary all ſhould be ſo arm'd againſt it, as not only to be perſwaded of its being a moſt Pernicious Evil, but likewiſe, not to think favorably of it, tho' they obſerve it to be their Practice, whoſe Lives, otherwiſe, ſeem without Reproof. And while this Caution muſt be given to all, let thoſe, who pretend to Piety, conſider what Accompt they have to make up, who by their ill Example, make this Caution neceſſary. Other Vices are more Scandalous, but this being a direct Oppoſition to one Principal Branch of Charity, it cannot be Inferior to any of the reſt, and will at the end be found as great an Obſtacle to Salvation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Inſtructions for Chriſtians ſubject to any Habitual Sin.

BY Habitual Sin, I mean a Cuſtom in what is notoriouſly Criminal or Vicious, whether Public or Private. And tho' from the Inſtructions already given, in preſcribing Remedies to ſome Particular Vices, may be eaſily underſtood, what muſt be the General Remedy and Method for all; yet a Repetition cannot be here uſeleſs, ſince it may be ſerviceable for thoſe, who thinking themſelves not concern'd in what has been ſaid above, may paſs it over, as ſuppoſing it not to belong to them.

In general therefore I ſay to all, who thro' an ill Cuſtom are Slaves to any Particular Vice, that if God touches their Hearts with the ſincere Deſires of true Converſion, they muſt remember, they have a great and difficult Work upon their Hands, ſuch as requires both Time, Labor, and more than Ordinary Patience for its Accompliſhment; and

that their Repentance cannot be ſincere, if they think of doing no more than what others do, for the obtaining Pardon of an Accidental or Occaſional Sin.

For in ſuch a Sin there is no more neceſſary, than a hearty Sorrow for the offence committed, and a Compliance with ſuch other Conditions, as are annexed to this Sorrow; but in the caſe of Habitual Sin, there can be no ſincere Repentance, but ſuch, as not only grieves at the Guilt Contracted, but likewiſe conſiders that great Weakneſs, to which he is ſubject, reſolves to make War againſt his own Inclinations, ſo as to live in hopes of overcoming them, as alſo to avoid the Occaſions, of his Sin. The reaſon is, becauſe there can be no true Repentance, where there is no ſincere Reſolutions of Amendment; and theſe Reſolutions cannot be ſincere where the Difficulties of Amendment are not conſider'd, and Care is not taken for uſing ſuch Endeavors, as bearing Proportion with the Difficulties, give Hopes of overcoming them. For without this, the Repentance may be deceitful, which pretending to grieve for what is paſt, is not Solicitous for preventing Relapſes into the ſame.

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The Habitual Sinner therefore deſiring to return to a new Life, is oblig'd, like all other Sinners, to Repent of whatever Offences he has committed; but being ſenſible of his Inclinations to Evil being ſtrengthen'd by the Cuſtom of Sinning, and that whatever good he propoſes, it is not likely to be Effectual, except he can weaken thoſe Inclinations and Paſſions, which ſo ſtrongly carry him to Sin, he is therefore bound to undertake this Work, which his unhappy Circumſtances have made neceſſary and peculiar to him.

But which way is he to go about it? The moſt Effectual would be, to ſeek ſome place of Retirement, in which being ſeparated from Company, and his uſual Provocations to Sin, he might wholly apply himſelf to ſuch Exerciſes of Piety and Mortification, as might be proper for convincing him of the Evil of his former State, and ſeaſoning his Soul with better Principles, ſuch as will make him reſolute in going thro' all the Labors and Difficulties of a Change. This, under the Direction of a Good Guide, is certainly the ſureſt way for coming to the deſir'd End; becauſe of the great Advantages the Penitent has in being remov'd from

uſual Dangers, and receiving all neceſſary Information and Encouragement.

Where this cannot be, the Penitent muſt come as near it as he can; having made choice of a Diſcreet Director, he is not to think preſently of going to the Sacrament of Penance, but only of fitting himſelf for doing it, as it ought to be done. And in the firſt place, is to lay before his Director the true State of his Soul, eſpecially as to thoſe Particulars, in which he experiences his greateſt Weakneſs; and after all Circumſtances duly weigh'd, being advis'd what Exerciſes are proper for him, how far he is oblig'd to avoid the Occaſions of Sin, and what Self-denials are neceſſary for Maſt'ring his Paſſions he muſt reſolutely undertake to follow Directions. And then from time to time, that is, at leaſt once a Week in the beginning of this new Courſe, have a Conference with his Director, to inform him how things ſucceed, and receive ſtill new Preſcriptions, as Difficulties and Circumſtances may require.

And here he muſt remember, not to be diſcourag'd, if he finds not a ſudden Change, but that his Evil continues Obſtinate, and ſeems not to abate notwithſtanding all his Endeavors. For

he muſt be mindful, what his Diſorder is, that it is Habitual, not to be overcome, but by a Change of the whole Interior Man; that as it came to this Head by degrees, ſo time muſt be allow'd for breaking its force, and regaining that command of himſelf, which he has loſt: That this is all driving up Hill, and making Head againſt the Stream, which is not to be done by one Puſh, but muſt be effected by Labor and Patience: That having been long ſubject to the Devil's Tyranny, he will be more than ordinarily induſtrious in keeping his hold, and, by his Troubleſome Aſſaults, endeavor to put him out of all Hopes of ever Accompliſhing his Deſigns: That the Divine Juſtice may permit theſe Difficulties, in Puniſhment of his former Sins, and to make him ſenſible, that it is no ſmall thing to have ſo long forſaken his God: That the Divine Mercy may concur in this, to make him know, how to value Virtue and Grace, by the difficulty of their purchaſe, and oblige him to be more Solicitous in preſerving them, when once obtain'd: Upon theſe Conſiderations he ought to hold on with Courage, Patience and Perſeverance, and not be tired with the Labor of his

Undertaking, nor diſheartn'd with the little Advance he makes in it; but ſtill continue with hopes, that Obſtinate Endeavors, under the favor of Heaven, will at length Maſter an Obſtinate Evil.

To this Conſtancy he muſt Animate himſelf, by Reflecting, that he works for Eternity, for an Everlaſting Crown, which is worth all his Labors, and that the Task is not to be eſteem'd hard, if his preſent Conflict may be a means for eſcaping Endleſs Miſery: Eſpecially too, when he conſiders, that the great difficulty, he finds in returning to God, is occaſion'd by his paſt Sins, which have given ſtrength to his Paſſions, and ſo accuſtom'd them to Evil, that they bend that way with Violence, and cannot now be unbent, but with a greater Force: Seeing therefore, that he has Rais'd to himſelf a ſtubborn Enemy, and the Uneaſineſs of his preſent Conflict is of his own making; he ought to Spur himſelf forward with the Reaſonableneſs of his bearing his own Burthen, and the Juſtice of thoſe Labors being Troubleſome, which are to be the Remedy and Puniſhment of unlawful Satisfactions. Upon theſe Conſiderations he is to go

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on, remembring he has a great way to go, even all that way he has formerly Departed from God by his Sins; and that his Endeavors are not to be Remitted, till he has Regain'd that Power to Reaſon and Faith, which he took out of their Hands, by ſubjecting them to his Vicious Inclinations.

Having ſpent ſome time in theſe Pious Endeavors, undertaken in the true Spirit of Penance, he may then, with Advice, prepare for going to Confeſſion; but at the ſame time ought to have ſuch a ſence of his own Miſery, as to judge himſelf unworthy of Abſolution, and much more of being Admitted to the Holy Communion: And therefore, if his Director ſhall think fit, to Suſpend theſe, and Oblige him to come again and again, he ought not to be Diſquieted; but with all Humility acknowledge the Juſtice of ſuch Proceeding, for the trial of his Sincerity, and to give him ſtill a deeper ſence of that unhappy ſtate, into which his Sins have brought him. If he cannot ſtoop to this, but with eagerneſs pleads for what his Director judges more reaſonable to differ, there is ground to ſuſpect his Repentance, which comes not attended with that Humility which be-

longs to his state; and that Delay, before only Advis'd, must be now Commanded, in hopes of some better Argument appearing of a true Conversion.

But while he is going on in this way, endeavoring, by reading good Books, to Efface the Maxims of the World, by some better Principles of the Gospel; and by frequent Prayer, to obtain those succors of Heaven, which are to carry him thro' his Work, he must likewise humble himself in some voluntary Mortifications, hoping by these to move the Divine Goodness to Compassion; to punish his past Sins, and overcome those Inclinations, which have engag'd him in Sin.

Almighty God has sufficiently Declar'd, both in the Old and New Testament, how much the Mortifications of an Humble Penitent, prevail with him, in order to turn away his Wrath, and open the Treasures of his Mercy; in *Moses* fasting Forty Days and Forty Nights for the Sins of his People; in the People of *Bethulia* being Deliver'd; in the *Ninevites* being Pardon'd; in *Achab* escaping the Judgments Threatned; in *Joel* preaching Repentance in Weeping and Fasting; in Christ describing

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Penance under the Characters of Sackcloth and Aſhes, and declaring Prayer and Faſting to be an Effectual Means of driving out the worſt of Evil Spirits. Now if a Sinner be ſenſible, how much he has provok'd the Wrath of God, and how Unworthy he is of all his Mercies, and here ſees what Method is moſt proper for Diſarming the Hand of God, ſtretch'd forth againſt him, and obliging his Juſtice to give way to his Mercy: Ought not he to Enter into this way, and inſtead of being concern'd at any Difficulties, rather rejoice in the hope that is given him of being Reconcil'd to Heaven, without thinking any Terms too hard, which are for taking him out of the Power of Hell, and opening the Arms of an Offended Father to a Child, that has liv'd in Rebellion againſt him, and is unworthy of ſuch Mercy?

This ſame Method he ought to purſue, upon a Second Motive of puniſhing his paſt Sins. For ſince he is ſenſible, that there is Puniſhment due to all Sins, and that, as the Juſtice of God is Rigorous in Exacting this Puniſhment, both from Repenting and Obſtinate Sinners, tho' in a different way, ſo the Church-Diſciplin re-

quires it, in declaring it to be a Debt of Juſtice; he cannot have a true Deteſtation of his paſt Offences, but it muſt be accompanied with a Sence of the Puniſhment due to the Offender, and a Reſolution of joining with the Juſtice of God and his Church in the diſcharge of ſo juſt a Debt. This will be a good Argument both to himſelf and his Director, of the Sincerity of his Repentance, and lay a ſubſtantial ground for Hopes of Mercy; ſince in ſo doing, he follows the Example of his Divine Maſter, who undertaking our Redemption by Suffering, has taught all true Penitents the way they are to take, and by the Mouth of his Apoſtle, encourag'd them to undertake it: Chriſt ſuffer'd for us, leaving you an Example, that you may follow his ſteps, and giving them hopes of Glory upon theſe terms: If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall likewiſe reign with him: if you are Companions in his Sufferings, you ſhall alſo partake in his Glory. This part therefore of Suffering being thus expreſly Enjoin'd and Declar'd to be one Condition for obtaining Mercy and Glory; the Penitent Chriſtian ought with a Thankful Heart receive the Preſcription, and with Reſolution follow

follow it, giving praiſe to his Redeemer for the Example he has ſhew'd in his own Sacred Perſon; acknowledging, there is nothing a Sinner is able to do, can be acceptable to God, but rejoicing, that, thro' the Sufferings of Chriſt, it may find acceptance with him. Thus if he undertakes to puniſh himſelf, upon the ſence of his Sins deſerving it, and God requiring it from him, and at the ſame time has his whole Dependance on the Paſſion of Chriſt, as to whatever good Effects his Sufferings can have with God, he need not fear of doing injury, to the Satisfaction of his Redeemer, but have hopes of it, being thus applied to his Soul, by complying with that Condition, which he himſelf has preſcrib'd.

Upon a Third Motive he ought to go on in the ſame way, and that is, for overcoming thoſe Inclinations, which have engag'd him in Sin. 'Tis the firſt thing requir'd by Chriſt of his Followers, that they deny themſelves, and take up their Croſs, or as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, that they Crucifie their Fleſh. We deny our ſelves, when we do nothing of what God forbids, nor omit any thing of what he Commands, without conſidering whether it be pleaſing or

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diſpleaſing to Inclination and Sence. This cannot be effected, but with great Self-denials, becauſe Nature is ever deſirous of being favour'd and pleas'd; and if a Chriſtian is to come to that ſtanding Temper, as to go on in the way of God's Commandments, without regarding Self, it muſt be by oppoſing all thoſe Inclinations, which Nature ſuggeſts. This is the ground of that Warfare, which is inſeparable from a Chriſtian Life; and if the beſt, like S. *Paul*, are ſenſible of it, thro' that Corruption, which is rooted in Nature; much more muſt thoſe be ſo, who by favoring their vicious Inclinations, have made them more violent. Hence muſt theſe have much greater difficulties, thro' the greater Contradiction of Nature to the Law of God, and it muſt be a more than ordinary task for them, not to conſider or regard its Inclinations, which they have made their ſtudy to gratifie for many Years. Many Self-denials muſt they therefore undergo, before they can expect to come to the Temper of a Chriſtian Life, and not only deny themſelves, but they muſt crucifie their Fleſh, ſo to bring it into ſubjection, and force out of its Hands, that Command, it has hitherto had;

this muſt be done by oppoſing its deſires, in depriving it of ſuch things, on which it is moſt eagerly bent, and forcing it to ſuffer and ſubmit to ſuch things, to which it is averſe: There being no other way of overcoming it, but by refuſing it, what it deſires, and obliging it to bend, to what it diſlikes.

If this be not undertaken, the Penitent propoſes his Converſion to little purpoſe, and only ſtrikes againſt the Air, but ſpares his Enemies: In his perverſe Inclinations are his greateſt difficulties, and if he labors not by this Contradictory way, to bring them under Government, he is never like to find Peace to his Soul, nor be long free from their Tyranny; which, if not overthrown, is only ſuſpended for a time, and will ſoon draw the whole Man into the wonted obedience. However therefore Prayers and Reading are neceſſary, yet if he confines himſelf to theſe, without uſing juſt Endeavors thus to Crucifie the Fleſh with all its Sinful Paſſions, it muſt be as great a Preſumption to expect Amendment, as for a Sick Man to Pray for Health, and obſtinately refuſe thoſe Medicines, which are to Correct his ill Humors, and remove the Cauſe of his Diſtemper.

Thus

Thus then Mortification becomes neceſſary to him, for recovering his Soul from that Uſurpt Command of his Paſſions, to which he has been hitherto ſubject

And if he happily diſengages himſelf from this Slavery, it is ſtill neceſſary for him, upon another Conſideration, I mean that mention'd by S. *Paul*, *Rom.* 6. 19. where giving direction to ſuch as had been deliver'd from a Sinful State, he requires them to make their Members now to be as ſerviceable to Juſtice for Sanctification, as they had before ſerv'd Uncleanneſs to Sin: That is, to let their Converſion be Proportion'd to their former Crimes, and their Exemplarity be as Remarkable, as their Vice had been. The Apoſtle was ſenſible, if they themſelves were not, how much their paſt Diſorders had been injurious to Piety, in making the Enemies of God Blaſpheme, and drawing others into Sin by their ill Example; therefore he calls upon them to make Satisfaction for whatever Prejudice they had done to the Faithful, and to the Church, and be now as Edifying, as before they had been Scandalous. This Motive ought to oblige all returning Sinners, after their Converſion, to perſevere

perſevere in the Method of a Mortified Life, and be now as ſerviceable to Virtue, as they had been before to Vice. Whence theſe ought to be Mindful, that their Solicitude is not only to be, in avoiding what is Sinful, for this all thoſe are oblig'd to, who have preſerv'd their Innocence, but their Diſciplin ought to be ſo ſtrict, as to Retrench many things, which others allow, and decline even the remoteſt Diſpoſitions to Evil, that ſo their Lives may be an Encouragement to Virtue, and a Condemnation of all their Ways, who admire the World and themſelves, while they declare their Averſion againſt the Vices of both. This is the Injunction of S. *Paul*, and it has ſo much Juſtice in it, that thoſe who Reflect on the manifold Miſchiefs they have done by their ill Example, will be willing to make Satisfaction, that ſo the Terror of this Debt, laid before them with all its Circumſtances at the laſt Hour, may not caſt them into Deſpair, whilſt they ſee, there's no place in Heaven for ſuch Injuſtice. Now whoever has Thoughts to ſatisfie this Second Part of their Converſion, muſt be under a neceſſity of many Self-denials, ſince it will oblige them to quit many things, which

which are Recommended by the Practice of those, who are esteemed Regular and Pious. There will be very much to be abated, in Expences of Table, Cloaths and Divertisements, a stricter Disciplin is to be observ'd, the Ways of Liberty and Idleness to be renounc'd, and in every particular to be consider'd, not what Custom, but the Gospel approves: For the World being favorable to Self-love and Corruption, few have any Commerce with it, but they get a Tincture of its Spirit, and insensibly are reconcil'd to many things, which, if weigh'd by the better Maxims of Christianity, ought to be suspected as dangerous at least, and hindrances to the great Work of Salvation. Those, who by the Endeavors of a Sincere Conversion, have consider'd the Rules of the Gospel, and seen how different it is from the common Spirit of the World, I do not mean of the Sinful, but more Regular part, will find the Narrow Way so widen'd by Pride, Self-love and Liberty, that there will scarce be any particular, wherein they will not see Reason for departing some degrees from it; if they are Animated by that first Fervor of Justice, which directs them to satisfie for the Injuries

Injuries done by their ill Example: And thus will have ſufficient matter for Continual Mortification, both in denying themſelves, what others practice and allow, and bearing the reproaches of thoſe, who will expoſe their Penitential Method, under the Colors of Phariſaical Particularity, Hypocriſie and Bigotry.

Theſe are Directions neceſſary for all thoſe, who deſire to diſingage themſelves from Habitual Sin; and in the manner of preſſing them, it may be eaſily obſerv'd, how much their way is here diſapprov'd, who ſeeing themſelves under theſe ill Circumſtances, and having Thoughts of beginning a new Life, go to Confeſſion, but inſtead of looking for a Director, who is beſt able to Adviſe, and whom they may frequently Conſult, purpoſely decline all ſo qualified, and make choice of a Stranger, who knows nothing of their Caſe, will ſay little to them, and whom they may never ſee again. Now, tho' their going to Confeſſion, ſhews ſome ſence of their Miſery, and ſome Deſires of Amendment; yet both theſe are very imperfect and inſincere, whilſt they avoid thoſe, who are moſt likely to do them good. And this they may

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eaſily underſtand, if ſuppoſing themſelves deſperately Sick, they ſhould take the ſame Method in the Choice of a Nurſe and a Phyſician, that is, enquire out for ſuch, whoſe Care and Skill is not likely to anſwer the neceſſity of their Condition.

Again, while theſe in preparing for Confeſſion, and after it, make but little Reflection on the Occaſions of their Sin, and conſider not of Means proper for overcoming their diſorder'd Paſſions, which carry them to Sin; they ſhew again how little in earneſt they are for effecting what they pretend in Confeſſion; ſince the Deſires of Amendment cannot be Sincere, where little or no Care is us'd, for preventing the return of their Evil. And therefore, while they go in this manner to Confeſſion, there is too much Reaſon to fear, they go unprepar'd, and that the Abſolution they receive from undiſcerning Paſtors, is not for the diſcharge, but the encreaſe of their Sins. Not but Abſolution may be ſometimes duly given, upon Relapſe into Sin, that is, when upon Examination of the Penitent, it appears, he has not been wanting in his Solicitude for Maſt'ring his ill Habit, and that his Relapſe

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is the effect of Weakneſs, and not of Indifferency or Neglect. But certainly, as for thoſe Habitual Sinners, who make a practice of going to the Sacrament of Penance at ſet times, but are not careful to avoid the uſual Occaſions of their Sins, nor overcoming their Corrupt Inclinations, their Confeſſions muſt be a Mockery and Sacrilegious, and the Abſolution Sinful in thoſe, that give it, in not ſatisfying the Obligation they have, of Diſcerning between Leper and Leper, and of not caſting Pearls to Swine. Whatever therefore may be the Preſent Cuſtom of ſome, it cannot be juſtified; ſince it is not agreeable to the Senſe of the Church, nor has any regard to true Repentance, which does not conſiſt in an outward Form, but in a Change of the Heart; and where Abſolution is given, without conſidering this interior Diſpoſition, 'tis not an Act of Juſtice, but of Raſhneſs; and tho' ſeemingly favorable to the Penitent, is moſt injurious to him, in flattering him under the guilt of Sin, and never making him ſenſible of his unhappy State.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Inſtructions for Chriſtians in Affliction.

THE great Unhappineſs of Chriſtians, is to be Unhappy, and not to think of making a right uſe of it To pretend to remedy all other Afflictions, would be Raſhneſs, ſince they are Entail'd on a Chriſtian Life; but to preſcribe Remedies for this one now mention'd, is a commendable Charity; in which I ſhall make an Eſſay.

To make any Advance in this way, the Chriſtian muſt be firm in this Firſt Principle: That Nature is not to be conſulted or hearkn'd to, but only Reaſon and Faith: For that as Nature is Weak, Corrupt and Blind in other things, and if follow'd, will certainly lead the Chriſtian out of the way, even to rebel againſt God, and trample on his Commands: So it is likewiſe in this point of Afflictions; there is ſo much of Self-love in it, and Pride, ſo immoderate a Deſire of preſent Eaſe and Satisfaction; that if regard be had

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to its Suggeſtions, the Chriſtian, in time of any Affliction, muſt neceſſarily be robb'd of all Peace, be diſturb'd with Anger and Impatience, and be tempted to murmur againſt Providence, for the Difficulty and Injuſtice of its Diſpenſations. Thus Nature, being Corrupt, will be quarrelſom at whatever makes it Uneaſie; and being Blind, will encreaſe its own Uneaſineſs, by ſtubbornly rebelling, or cowardly ſinking under the Oppreſſion; and there can be no remedy expected againſt this Evil, nor hopes of Peace, if help be not look'd for ſome other way.

And from whence muſt this be, but from the Aſſiſtance of Reaſon and Faith, which being ſuperior to Nature, are to over-rule all its Suggeſtions and Motions by a better Light and Power from God? Whilſt Nature therefore, judging of all Afflictions by what it feels, is repreſenting them as Evil, and abſolutely concluding, there can be no poſſibility of Comfort, as long as they ſubſiſt, and that the only Hopes is from their Removal; Reaſon and Faith muſt Examin this Information, and ſee, whether Afflictions are ſuch real Evils, as Nature brings them in, and whether a Chriſtian Soul can find Motives of Comfort under them. Now

Now theſe calling over the Cauſe, proceed upon Principles very different from thoſe of Nature; not judging things Good or Evil by their being Agreeable or Diſagreeable to Senſe; but conſidering them by another Rule. Theſe have one ſtanding and unalterable Principle, That God is the only Sovereign Good; that the only Happineſs of a Chriſtian is in the Poſſeſſion of God; that the great Buſineſs of his Life being to come at length to the Poſſeſſion of him, nothing can be a real Evil and Unhappineſs, which deprives him not of God, and nothing a real Good, which removes him at a greater diſtance from God, and puts him in danger of for ever loſing him: But that all that is to be eſteem'd Good, which helps him towards God; and all that to be eſteem'd Evil, which turns him from him.

Now the reputed Goods and Evils of this Life being meaſur'd by theſe Principles, the Chriſtian finds, that if conſider'd in themſelves, they are to be eſteem'd *Indifferent*, that is, neither Good nor Evil; becauſe, of themſelves, they neither lead to, nor turn from God; but that this depends on the uſe that is made of them; if a good uſe be made of

of Prosperity, it leads towards God, and is therefore Good; if an ill use, it turns from God, and is therefore Evil; and so likewise of Adversity or Affliction.

Hence he sees, that the Goods and Evils of this Life being indifferent in themselves, they are not so in regard of Man: But that whatever is most capable and likely to fix his Heart on Creatures, is to him most Dangerous, and inclining to Evil; because all this diverts him from God: And whatever is most capable and likely to take his Heart off this World and Creatures, is more Profitable, and inclining towards Good, because it puts him in a state of seeking and fixing his Heart more on God. Now, the Experience being too evident, that whatever is pleasing to Corrupt Nature, draws to the Creature, and whatever is displeasing, disengages from it; in this sense, the greatest part of those things, which the World reputes Good, are often Evil; and what it numbers amongst Evils, are often really Good.

From this Principle of Faith and Experience, the Christian may find sufficient Motives of Comfort, and even Joy, amidst the severest Afflictions, from

from as many Heads, as Afflictions appear helpful towards the Poſſeſſion of God. Firſt then, in being depriv'd of what Nature loves, as of Riches, Health, *&c.* he has reaſon to be comforted, becauſe his Enemy is thus diſarm'd, and thoſe things taken from him, which would fix his Heart on the Creature. His only danger of being for ever ſeparated from God, is from his immoderate love of things Created, and giving them a preference in his Heart to God; and has not he then reaſon to be ſatisfied, when, by the Appointment of God, this danger is diminiſh'd, and thoſe things taken from him, which preſs with greateſt weight upon his Heart, and put him moſt in hazard of loſing the Thoughts of his Eternal Good? The Natural Inclination he has to the World, and Worldly Goods, is that which generally takes off his Solicitude from providing for his Everlaſting Peace; and, if God, by depriving him of what he loves, and rendring this World uneaſie to him, opens his Eyes to ſee this Life to be a place of Baniſhment, and raiſes in him Deſires of ſeeking Reſt in a better World, may not he diſcover a Mercy in all Afflictions, ſuch as deſerves his Thanks, and

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with all their uneaſineſs give him Occaſion of Joy, not ſuch, it may be, as will Affect the Sences, but a Joy of Faith, for being in ſuch a State, where the Divine Providence would have him be, and is moſt Effectual for bringing him to the Poſſeſſion of him? This Joy muſt be, where Faith is not Barren, but Active: For if a Chriſtian believes a Future State, and deſires to be Eternally Happy, he cannot but be ſatisfied, when he ſees himſelf in the ſureſt way of coming to that Happineſs, which he believes and deſires, tho' it be not ſo agreeable to Senſe as that deſires.

Secondly, When he conſiders, that nothing happens in this World but by the Appointment or Permiſſion of God; that whatever he appoints or permits is the effect of his Juſtice or Mercy; that theſe being always Holy and Adorable in themſelves, are ſo likewiſe in their Effects: That 'tis therefore Reaſonable and Juſt, all his Creatures ſhould ſubmit to them; becauſe he being Soveraign Lord of all, 'tis reaſonable he ſhould Order and Command, and they Obey: That in this Obedience and Submiſſion is his greateſt Wiſdom, becauſe in this he ſubjects all to Him,

who being All-wiſe, knows what is beſt for him; that in this is the moſt perfect degree of Virtue; becauſe the Will of God being infinitely Perfect and Holy, he cannot otherwiſe approach to this Perfection and Holineſs, than by not regarding his own Will, which is imperfect, and Conforming it, in the beſt manner he is able, to the Will of God. Now, when under the greateſt Trials, he ſees the Order and Will of God in them, and conſiders his ſubmiſſion to them, as the Act of the greateſt Wiſdom, Perfection and Virtue, and that this is what God requires as moſt acceptable to him, and moſt available in order to his Eternal Happineſs, he finds in this State of Affliction, ſufficient matter for preſent Satisfaction, and that his Soul, by the help of Faith, may be fill'd with Comfort, even while the Body is groaning under the weight of its Burthen.

Thirdly, When he conſiders, that ſubmitting to Afflictions with Humility and Patience, is a moſt Effectual Means for obtaining Pardon of Sin; that God is full of Compaſſion and Mercy, and in the Day of Tribulation will forgive Offences, as the Scripture aſſures him; in this he finds Motives of

of preſent Comfort; for that having no Reaſon to apprehend a Miſcarriage, as to his Eternal Lot, but only from the juſt Anger of God, provok'd by his Sins; he has now Reaſon to Hope, that God will ſhew Mercy; for that in the Affliction he ſuffers, he has a fair Opportunity of rendring God Propitious to him. Where-ever there is a real Fear of loſing God, there muſt neceſſarily Comfort ariſe from that, which gives Hopes of coming to the Poſſeſſion of him.

Fourthly, When he conſiders that Tribulations are the Trial of the Chriſtian's Fidelity; that no Virtue can be eſteem'd truly ſo, which has not been Tried; that God has carried his beſt Servants thro' theſe Trials; that this is the Portion he has Appointed for them on Earth; that the Way to Heaven is thro' many Tribulations; that Chriſt himſelf made choice of this Way, that to the ſame he call'd his Apoſtles, that as many as are now in the Enjoyment of Bliſs, have been all Tried like Gold in the Furnace, and that many of them had never come to the Senſe of their Duty, had they not been thus awakn'd by the Mercy of a Scourge.

When he conſiders, I ſay, Afflictions as thus helpful towards the Poſſeſſion of God, he finds Reaſons of Faith to be Comforted, where Nature and Sence ſee no Reaſons but of Complaint. And this is his great Buſineſs in time of Affliction, to awaken his Soul, and put it upon conſidering theſe Motives of Faith, that ſo he may force Nature to yield to what is Superior to it, and as the Apoſtle ſays, This is the Victory, which overcomes the World, our Faith; ſo he may obtain this Victory by Faith.

Whenever therefore he falls under any Affliction, whether Temporal or Spiritual, he cannot but Acknowledge, that Nature, thro' the Uneaſineſs it feels, is preſently diſquieted; and if the Trouble preſſes with weight on any Tender Part, it is fill'd with ſuch lively Impreſſions of the Evil it ſuffers, that overwhelm'd, as it were with Grief and Confuſion, it covers the Underſtanding and Soul with a Cloud of Darkneſs, that they ſee none of thoſe Motives of Faith, which ſhould afford Relief: And while under this diſturbance, tis ſtrange, what Rebellious and Unchriſtian Thoughts poſſeſs the Imagination; ſo that the Soul ſeems

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to be void of Faith, and to know nothing of the Principles of the Goſpel. Thus it is with him, under the firſt Surprize of ſome great Misfortune, and likewiſe at other times, when, thro' ſome Melancholy Diſpoſition the Heart is oppreſs'd, and lies, as it were, under a Dead weight, without Motion or Life. Now tho' he muſt own, that this is a frightful State, ſuch as ſeems to be accompanied with a manifold Guilt, and the Diſpleaſure of God; yet when he looks back upon it with greater liberty of Mind, and ſees all this to be the effect of a Soul diſcompos'd by the violence of Nature, that it is then oppreſs'd and darkn'd, and that all thoſe Impious Thoughts are only the Workings of an Imagination, for that time under no Government, he, upon this conſideration, Hopes, there is more of Terror in it, than of Guilt; and that God will never Charge him with that Diſorder in which he is wholly Paſſive.

But however, ſince he knows, the Corruption of Nature ought to be ſubject to Reaſon and Faith, hence he is ſenſible, his Duty obliges him, as ſoon as he can recover the liberty of his

Thoughts, to make ſome reſiſtance a-gainſt it, by renouncing all its perverſe Suggeſtions, and forcing it to give way to ſome better Principles. For this End, he propoſes to the Underſtanding all thoſe Conſiderations above-mention'd; preſſing the Duty of ſubmitting to him, who is Supreme Lord of all, ſhewing the Conveniencies of ſuch a Submiſſion, and the great Advantages, that may be made of it, in order to his Eternal Good. And thus tries all ways to Convince the Soul of its preſent Obligation of ſtifling all the impreſſions of Nature, and putting all into the Hand of God, to Order and Appoint every thing, as he ſhall think fit. And tho', he can never come ſo far, as to remove all Uneaſineſs from Nature and Senſe; yet if he can bend down with this uneaſineſs under the Hand of God, and upon the Motives of Faith, Surrender himſelf to his Holy Diſpoſition, he Hopes God will accept of this Sacrifice he makes of himſelf, and have Compaſſion on all that weakneſs of Nature, which he can heartily Lament, but knows not how to Remedy.

In this manner he endeavors to go on under all Afflictions, ſtill oppoſing the Conſiderations of Faith to the Difficulties of Nature, and with theſe ſupporting her

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under all her weakneſs. To theſe Endeavors he adds his daily Prayers, beſeeching God to give him Patience and Strength, that he may not ſink under his Trouble; and calling to mind his Infinite Goodneſs, and the Promiſes he has made of ſhewing Mercy to thoſe that call upon him in Tribulation, he upon this grounds a firm Hope, that God will be his Helper: Tho', as to the manner, in which this is to be done, he does not preſs with too much Eagerneſs; but leaves it to Him, who knows what is beſt for him, to order all, as ſhall ſeem good in his Eyes, either by delivering him from the Evil he ſuffers, or giving him Patience to make an Advantage of it.

Going on in this way, he is watchful againſt all manner of Dejection of Spirit; becauſe he knows how Pernicious this is, in darkning the Mind, and making it uncapable of diſcerning thoſe Reaſons, which ſhould be its help: As likewiſe in fitting it for the Devil's Snares, and a Thouſand Temptations, which he cannot afterwards think on without Horror. For the ſame Reaſon, he checks all Inclinations to unprofitable Amuſements, becauſe theſe feed Melancholy, and lead to Dejection; and therefore he concludes it his Intereſt and Duty, to give them the moſt ſpeedy Interruption

ruption he can. Upon the ſame conſideration, he Affects no Extraordinary Retirement, above that, which common Decency requires, becauſe this is generally the effect of Humor, and not of Reaſon, which cannot favor ſuch ways, as only help to keep him out of the way, and hinder him from coming to a true Senſe of his Duty. Wherefore he rather chuſes ſome Employment, agreeable to Circumſtances, ſuch as may fill his Time and his Thoughts, and admits of Friends, hearkning to their Advice, who are capable of giving it, and with others declining all Complaints, and chuſing rather to diſcourſe of Indifferent Matters; becauſe, to be ever touching upon the Sore, is to keep the Wound open, and hinder it from cloſing.

To make him ſteddy in this Healing Method, he frequently Reads ſuch Books, as put him in Mind of his Duty; amongſt which the *Following of Chriſt*, has a principal place, where there is ſcarce a Chapter, which has not ſomething Medicinal in it, by diſſipating thoſe ill Humors, which are rais'd by Melancholy, and ſuggeſting ſuch Motives, as may compoſe his Thoughts, and by Reſignation and Patience, help him to Peace of Mind. And whenever he finds himſelf in danger

ger of being overwhelm'd with Sadneſs, or at other times perceives any tolerable freedom of Spirit, he endeavors, by ſome of the following Reflections, to prevent the Storm, or improve the Calm.

My God, is it not juſt, that thou ſhould'ſt Govern, and I Submit?

Thou know'ſt what is beſt for me, and why ſhould I then, a Poor, Blind and Miſerable Creature, diſpute thy Orders, and grieve at what thou haſt done?

How often have I own'd thy Power and Wiſdom, in begging thy Will to be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven? And when thy Will is manifeſt to me, I preſently begin to Rebel; my Mind is fill'd with Impatience, and my Thoughts with unreaſonable Phancies.

I begin to murmur and think, thou haſt dealt hardly by me, and complain of the weight, thy Hand has laid upon me.

I ſpend my Days in Sighs, a heavy Oppreſſion makes the Nights long, and my Heart refuſes all Comfort, becauſe thou haſt ſtretch'd out thy Arm againſt me.

And where now, my Soul, is all thy Faith, and the Profeſſions thou haſt hitherto made.

Is he thy God; and where then is thy

Obedience? Why do'ſt not thou bow down before him, and force thy Stubborn Nature to bend to his Decrees?

Is any thing done without his Order? Is not his Will in all that has happen'd?

What then, if it pleaſes not thee? Wilt thou no longer ſerve and be ſubject to thy God, than while he is doing thy Will, and pleaſing thee?

Look on this Self-love and be aſham'd: Is all thy Religion then come to this, to Bleſs thy God, when he has Bleſſings in his Hands, and then to Murmur, when he Conſults not thy Eaſe, in what he does?

'Tis plain then, thou lov'ſt not his Will, but only the Gifts it brings; and when theſe ſeem to ſtop, thou canſt no longer ſay, thy Will be done.

And is this the Chriſtian thou art, and intend'ſt to be? 'Tis what Nature teaches, but not the Leſſon of Faith and Grace.

Hearken but to theſe, and they will teach thee a more General Subjection; they will teach thee to Meaſure the Appointments of God, not by their agreeableneſs with thy Convenience; but by the Will from which they come: And ſince all comes from his Will, to Adore him in all.

This thou art oblig'd to, becauſe he is thy God: And canſt not thou find

find Reaſon enough for this Submiſſion?

How many Good things haſt thou receiv'd from his Hands; and why not then ſome that are Evil?

May not he thus try thy Fidelity, and ſee whether thy Virtue be Solid, and thy Profeſſions Sincere?

To ſerve God in the midſt of his Bleſſings, is not to be truſted; but to continue Faithful, when he Afflicts, is the Argument of a Good Servant.

'Tis thus thy Humility, thy Patience and Faith are tried; and if in the Exerciſe of theſe be thy Juſtification, thy Profeſſion is Vain, if thou fail'ſt, when thou com'ſt to the Practice.

May not then this Affliction be the Effect of an Infinite Goodneſs, to make thee know thy ſelf, and ſee, what thou wanteſt; that ſo thou may'ſt not truſt thy Salvation on the appearance of Virtue; but ſeek for that, which is more ſubſtantial and approv'd?

May it not be a help, to make thee know the World, that there is nothing laſting in it; that all its Goods are ſhort-liv'd, and will certainly deceive thoſe, who fix their Comfort or Love in them?

Is it a Misfortune to be convinc'd of this, whilſt thou haſt yet time before thee to correct thy Error, by ſeeking

ſome

ſome more ſubſtantial Good, which can never fail thee?

For this thou waſt Created, and if forgetful of thy End, thou ſtoppeſt in the way, by fixing thy Heart on Creatures, is it not a Mercy, that calls upon thee, and bids thee look forward?

And if this be done, by touching thee in the moſt Senſible Part; 'tis what thy Blindneſs has made neceſſary, who wilt not otherwiſe be convinc'd of thy Affections being miſplaced, but by loſing what thou loveſt?

And here, while thou complain'ſt of thy Loſs, tell me, is it a Loſs not to be Born by a Chriſtian, to be depriv'd of a Creature, that thou may'ſt be put in the way of poſſeſſing God?

The love thou haſt placed on the World, was due to God; and if he takes this way to do Juſtice to himſelf, the Gain will be thine; for tho' he be Happy without thee, thou canſt not be ſo without Him?

Wherefore inſtead of immoderately bewailing thy Loſs, ſtrive to be Patient and Humble under it: Such an Humiliation will be more to thy Advantage, than thy former Satisfaction in the Enjoyment of what now is not.

Act then rationally, and grieve not at

the

the Advantage thou haſt: Act according to Faith, and think it not a Misfortune to be put in the way of being Eternally Happy.

And if there be a difficulty in what thou ſuffer'ſt; doſt not thou deſerve this Puniſhment, for the Bleſſings of Heaven, which thou haſt ungratefully abus'd?

How great has thy Ingratitude been, and how many thy Sins, in regard of the very thing now taken from thee? And with the continuance of it, canſt thou tell me, thy Sins would not have been multiplied?

If then God puniſhes thy paſt ſinful Abuſes, and takes from thee the Occaſion of making thy ſelf more Unhappy, is not this both Juſtice, which thou art bound to adore, and Mercy, which thou art oblig'd to love?

Beſides theſe, are there not infinite other Sins, by which thou haſt provok'd thy God, and ſtand'ſt endebted to his Juſtice? If there be Puniſhment due, why doſt thou not accept it? Is it not better to ſuffer here, than be reſerv'd for a more terrible Judgment hereafter?

If it be what thou haſt drawn upon thy own Head, complain not of the Hand, that holds the Scourge; but of thy Sins alone, which have provok'd it: Humble thy

thy ſelf under it in the true Spirit of Penance, and have Comfort in the hopes of Pardon; for that this Juſtice is the Effect of Mercy.

And if thy Sins do not reproach thee, yet ought'ſt thou cheerfully to ſubmit, taking this Affliction, as part of that Croſs, which Chriſt is pleas'd to lay upon thee, as part of his own.

The Character of a Diſciple is in bearing the Croſs; for thus he reſembles his Maſter: So he went before, ſo he commands thee to follow after.

The whole Life of Chriſt was Croſs and Martyrdom; if he calls thee to the Fellowſhip of the ſame, canſt thou love him, and think thy ſelf unhappy in thus being united to him?

If this be the way he choſe for himſelf, and to the ſame has call'd his moſt Faithful Servants; fix thy Eyes on this Company, and ſee, if there may not be ſome Comfort to eaſe thy diſtemper'd Mind.

Look on the Reward, he has promis'd to ſuch as ſuffer with patience: An Everlaſting Happineſs ſhall unite them to him: They ſhall reign with him, who ſuffer with him.

The Condition is ſuffering with him; all ſuffer here, both Juſt and Sinners; if Unhappineſs is to be one Portion of thy Life,

Life, why ſhould'ſt thou loſe this, which may be the Price of a Crown?

And yet 'tis all loſt, if thou ſuffer'ſt not with Chriſt; 'tis Patience and Humility muſt ſanctifie thy Sufferings, and render them a Sacrifice acceptable to God.

O God, I cannot but acknowledge, I ſee Reaſons to oblige me to a peaceable Submiſſion, and to eſteem all my Sufferings, as the Effect of thy Mercy; I ſee the good thou propoſeſt in ſeparating me from the World, and inviting my Heart to thee; I ſee a manifold Advantage I might make, of what I call my Misfortune. But, O God, thou ſeeſt too what I am; I am too ſtubborn to bend, and too weak to bear; Self-love is my hindrance, and an infirm Nature is more ready to complain, than improve under thy Scourge. I can propoſe well ſometimes, but then a dark Storm comes and overthrows all my Deſigns; and thus, by my Impatience, I am a daily loſer, where thou propoſeſt my gain. What then ſhall I do? O God, I lay all my Weakneſs before thee; conſider it, I beſeech thee, and have Compaſſion; ſhew Mercy to thy Servant, and help me: My Eyes are now upon thee, as my only Helper; give me Strength from above, proportion'd to my Burthen, and teach me now to do thy

Will:

Will: Let thy Grace prevail upon my Corruption, let no more Complaints be heard from my Mouth; let Faith and Humility compoſe my diſorder'd Soul; let me now conclude it beſt to be, as thou wilt have it be: Let Reſolution and Sincerity at this Moment confirm my Heart, and in the Spirit of thy afflicted Son, let me now and every Day pronounce his Sacred Words; Lord, not my Will, but thine be done.

In this manner does the Faithful Chriſtian, in time of Trouble, endeavor to compoſe his uneaſie Thoughts, and bring his Heart into ſubjection to his Lord. And tho' all here ſuggeſted may not ſuit with all Circumſtances; yet there is no ſort of Affliction, which may not here find Relief. I pray God be the Comfort of all Afflicted Souls, and teach them to ſeek Comfort in him.

CHAP. XIII.

Inſtructions for Laborious or Working Chriſtians.

'TIS generally reputed an Unhappineſs, to be oblig'd to work for Bread;

Bread; but ſince the Advocates, that plead thus againſt it, are Self-love, Sloth and Pride, there is Reaſon to Hope, it deſerves a better Character, ſince they, that thus render it Contemptible, are too Infamous, to have their Opinion paſs for Juſt amongſt Chriſtians; who may rather conclude it to be Honorable and Holy, becauſe theſe think ſo ill of it.

'Tis true, all Labor may be eſteem'd an Unhappineſs, if it be conſider'd, as the Mark and Puniſhment of Sin; but if we look on it, as the Penance impos'd by God himſelf on Sinners, and as the Remedy of many Evils, to which thro' their Natural Corruption, they are ſubject, it muſt then have a better Name, and be reputed a Happineſs belonging to this State: Even ſuch a Happineſs, as it is for one, who is very much in Debt, to have wherewith to Diſcharge it; or for one, who being expos'd to many Dangers, is provided with ſufficient Means for his Security. For ſince by Sin, all Chriſtians are endebted to God, the ſureſt way to ſatisfie it, muſt be by cheerfully ſubmitting to the Puniſhment of the Sin: And ſince Idleneſs is the Root of many Evils; he that is oblig'd

to

to daily Work, has by the Circumſtances of his State, the Ax laid to this Root, for preventing its unhappy Growth.

Hence the Firſt Inſtruction for theſe ſort of Chriſtians, is to undertake their daily Work in the Spirit of Obedience, that is, in Obedience to the Order of God. They are to conſider themſelves, as in a kind of Religious Order, in which God himſelf has inſtituted their Rule: He has expreſly Commanded, that they ſhall Eat their Bread in the Sweat of their Brows; and if in ſubmiſſion to this Command, they undertake their Work, it is certain, their daily Toil will be as much an Act of Religion and Obedience, as what thoſe do, who live in a Cloyſter, and obſerve the Rules of their Founder.

II. They are to conſider their Work, as part of that Penance, which the Juſtice of God has impos'd on Sin. And if upon this conſideration, they humbly ſubmit to all the Trouble of it; if, in this Spirit, they cheerfully quit their Beds in the Morning, and with Fidelity go thro' all the uneaſineſs of the Day, 'tis certain, their daily Work will thus become a continued

Act

Act of Penance; and in this they will have another Resemblance with the best Religious; whose daily Endeavors are by repeated Mortifications to do Penance for their Sins. And what better Penance, than that which God has fixt on Sin? Even that, which the Primitive Ermits undertook, and those now follow, whose Eminent Sanctity turns upon them the Eyes of our present World.

III. They are to consider their daily Labor, as a Means to preserve their Souls Pure from that general Corruption, which is the Effect of Idleness. Infinite are the Evils of an Idle Life; this opens the Way to all manner of Vice, and leads directly into the Broad Way. Now if these would consider the danger they are in, arising from the common Weakness of a Corrupt Nature, and undertake their daily Work, as the best Preservative against this Corruption; willingly embracing it, for their better Security against the Evils, which Idleness might otherwise lead them into; they would in this act according to Christian Prudence, and concurr in the first design of the Best Religious, who observing the Dangers of the World, re-

solve

ſolve upon withdrawing from it, that ſo by their diſtance, they may not be expos'd to the Occaſions of Sin. Now, if what Religious do by Retiring, theſe do by Working, the End in both is the ſame, tho' the Means be different, and the Act in both may be truly ſaid Religious.

IV. They are to conſider their daily Labor, as a Means to provide for themſelves and Family; and this being what the Obligation of their State lays upon them, all what they do, upon this Motive, is an Act of Juſtice; and thus may be made an Offering acceptable to God; ſo as not only to Work for Bread in all they do, but likewiſe for Eternity; ſince whatever is here undertaken on the Motive of Juſtice, muſt be available to Everlaſting Life. Now in this part again they may concurr with the beſt Religious; for ſince the deſign of theſe in their Retirement, is to make a Sacrifice of their Lives to God; will not Working Chriſtians do ſo too, if they ſanctifie all their Labors by the Motives of Juſtice, and offer them all to God, in compliance with the Obligations of their State? It cannot be queſtion'd, but thus they will be well-pleaſing in the ſight of God,

God, and that their Labors may be allow'd by Justice, as theirs were heretofore by Faith, who for being Christians were condemn'd to dig in Mines.

By observing these few Instructions, all Laboring Christians may render their Lives truly Christian, Holy and Religious. 'Tis true, they have not that Opportunity for frequent Prayer; but yet they may Pray still: They ought to begin the Day with Prayers; so to Consecrate their Labors and themselves to God; if this cannot be long, because Business presses, yet if faithfully perform'd, as Circumstances will allow, it may, like the Widows Mite, find as good acceptance, as the longer Exercises of those, who have their time at Command. Other Prayers they may say, even at their Work, by raising up their Hearts to God in short Ejaculations; by acknowledging their Misery, asking for Mercy, Grace and Protection from Sin, *&c.* This may be done in Shops, in the Field, in the Kitchen, with the Needle, Broom, or Hammer in the Hand; there being scarce any Exercise of Corporal Labor, but where the Mind has liberty enough, of raising it self above the Employment of the

the Hands. And 'tis this ought to be much recommended to all, who by neceſſary Buſineſs being ſtreitn'd in their time, ſcarce find leiſure to begin or end the Day, by bending their Knees to God in Prayer: Becauſe by help of ſuch Thoughts, they live mindful of God, and give proof of their dependance on him. Beſides theſe accidental Flights, they may be Conſtant, at the Beginning of every Action to Offer it to God, deſiring him to accept it, in union with the Labors of Jeſus Chriſt on Earth, and in the diſcharge of their Duty. 'Tis thus the Apoſtle gives Directions to Chriſtians to do all in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that ſo whatever they do, may be ſanctified thro' him; and by this holy Expedient, they have it in their power, to make all their Actions Prayer.

I could wiſh likewiſe, thoſe, who have Families, would meet, with all under their Care, and conclude the Day with Prayer: If their early Riſing and hard Labor render their tir'd Spirits unfit for the common Exerciſes of Night, let them take ſhorter Prayers, which God, knowing their Circumſtances, will not fail to accept. And on *Sundays* and Holy-days, they ought

ought to be exact in satisfying the Duties of those Days; if they have not the Opportunities of a Public Assembly, they must do it in the best manner they are able at home; always taking some time both Morning and Afternoon for Reading some Good Books, which may revive in them the Memory of their Duty, and quicken in them the desire of complying with it; and if this can be done in Common, it will be more Exemplary and Beneficial.

In this manner may laboring Christians, even amidst the Toil and Distraction of their Lives, answer all the Obligations, which the Gospel lays upon them, and prepare for dying happily. There are however some Points, in which they are to be careful: First, In not going to their Work, like Brutes, without thinking of those Motives, which may make their Labors available to Salvation. Secondly, If they work for Hire, to be Faithful in what they undertake, and not favor themselves in his wrong, who employs them. Thirdly, Not to let Covetousness make them Diligent, but Duty. Fourthly, To suppress all immoderate Solicitude, but to trust in Providence, that if they are truly Industrious, they shall

ſhall find help in all Neceſſities. Fifthly, If they work in Company, to avoid all ſinful Diſcourſe and Songs, as likewiſe Animoſities and Quarrels. Sixthly, To accuſtom themſelves to no ſort of Prophane Expreſſions, as of Curſing, Swearing, *&c.* And ſince Mirth is commendable in them, to confine it to what is Innocent, and not ſeek Diverſion, in what will pleaſe the Devil, but make God their Enemy Seventhly, To keep Peace in their Families. Eighthly, If they want ſome Relief in the Evening, to make their own Homes the place of it, and not go to ſuch Houſes, where they will be tempted to ſpend Extravagantly in the Night, what they gain with Toil in the Day. Where there is a Wife, it is her part to contribute to this, by making Home eaſie and comfortable; for it is a Temptation to a Man, who has been laboring all Day, to ſeek Relief abroad, if he cannot find it in his own Houſe; and on this Conſideration, beſides others, ſhe is oblig'd to govern her Paſſions and Tongue, and connive at many things, which ſhe cannot try to mend, but by making them worſe. Ninthly, To be moderate in their Expences, and not ſpend Extravagantly in Drink, Diet, or Cloaths.

Cloaths, what ſhould be their ſupport in Sickneſs or Age, or the Proviſion of Children. Laſtly, If ſome more than Ordinary Reſt be taken on *Sundays* or Holy-days, not to ſpend them, at leaſt, in Idleneſs; and if they uſe ſome Diverſion, after the Duties of ſuch Days are ſatisfied for the Relief of their Spirits, not to make this the Principal Buſineſs of them, by going into Idle Company, and Committing greater Sins on Days, that ought to be Sanctified, than in all the Week beſide. Thoſe, who Labor hard all the Week, are under great Temptations, on all Days, wherein they do not Work, of running into ſome Folly, Extravagance or Exceſs: For while Diverſion ſeems neceſſary for them, they can have no Scruple in ſeeking it; and while the World is ſo Corrupt as it is, they cannot eaſily find it, but with the danger of being drawn into ſome Diſorder; and hence is often Dated the Ruin of themſelves and Families. Wherefore, I think it a very Important Point for this Rank of Chriſtians, to ſee, how they keep theſe Days, and particularly in all their Recreations, to make choice of ſuch Company, whoſe Principles of Sobriety, Piety, and Modeſty, may ſecure them a-

gainſt the Common Evils of Idleneſs, and to avoid ſuch Places, where they know they cannot divert themſelves, but with the evident hazard of Sin.

Theſe Cautions I preſs to Laboring Chriſtians, that ſo while their Circumſtances exempt them from many Occaſions of Sin, and Oblige them to ſpend the great part of their Lives in ſuch a way, as is capable of being Sanctified, even like that of the Ermit, and ſtricteſt Religious, they may not loſe the fruit of all their Labors for want of a little Care: It being truly a matter of Pity, to think, that they, who take ſuch Pains, ſhould make no Advantage of what they do; but after having born the Burthen of the Day, ſhould at the Evening be depriv'd of what was deſign'd for their Hire, and as the Reward of their Labors: Which Unhappineſs can no otherwiſe be prevented, but by a due Care in theſe Particulars; and a Neglect here will likely prove the Loſs of all.

Could they bring their Lives to theſe Rules, I ſhould think them the Happieſt of all degrees of Chriſtians, that are in the World; and a little Reflection will teach them to think ſo, notwithſtanding all the Hardſhip they undergo,

dergo, and the mean Opinion the World has of them. For when I conſider their daily Toil in working for Bread, I ſee in this the Happineſs of being deliver'd from that Idleneſs, which leads the great part of the World into Hell. I follow after the Rich, whom the World calls Happy, and ſee them at their Bottles and Cards, at their Entertainments, Muſick, Park, Plays, *&c.* and while they are here ſpending their Souls, their Lives and Money, I turn to the Laboring Man, and ſeeing him Sweating with the Hammer, Ax or Spade; I preſently ſay, How much better art thou Employ'd, than thoſe, whom Plenty makes Idle: Happy is that Neceſſity, which obliges thee to Labor, and happy that Labor, which delivers thee from Idleneſs. I then turn to his Table, and ſeeing, how Sparing it is, I am inclin'd to think him unfortunate, becauſe he is no better provided; but when I conſider, he has enough for the ſubſiſtence and ſupport of Nature; and what he wants, is only wanting to the demands of Gluttony and Intemperance; I here proclaim him Happy again, who Eats according to the deſign of Providence, that is, for Life and Strength, and not

as an Unbeliever, for Senſuality and Vice. I look again on his Furniture and Cloaths, and begin to pity him; but when I ſee Neceſſity and Decency ſufficiently provided for; I then ſay, Wherein art thou Unhappy? Is it becauſe thou haſt nothing to throw away upon Curioſity and Vanity? Rather, the more happy for this; in being tied by thy Circumſtances to Duty, and reſtrain'd from what is Vicious.

Thus looking on Laboring Chriſtians, I ſee many Advantages in their State; Firſt, In their Labor, which is a Daily Sacrifice, and Atonement for Sin. Secondly, In their Wants, in not having wherewith to feed Pride, Ambition, Luxury and Extravagance. It is in theſe Wants only they are diſtinguiſh'd from Men of Plenty: And if Pride, Luxury and Extravagance are Evil, there can be no more Misfortune, in not having wherewith to feed and ſtrengthen theſe, than it is in a Sick Man, in not having Opportunities of increaſing his Diſtemper. Hence, if things are meaſur'd by the Goſpel, it muſt be acknowledg'd, that the Laboring Man at the Anvil, has much the Preference to the Rich Man at his Entertainments and Games: That his

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ſpare Diet anſwerable to Neceſſity, is better than the other's Abundance, by which he courts Appetite and Sence: That his Plain and Courſe Dreſs, which Nature and Modeſty demand, is more commendable than the other's Coſt and Flutter, which are only to gratifie his own Vain Humor, or to complement a Diſtemper'd World. 'Tis plain from the firſt Rudiments of the Goſpel, which of theſe is in the more Chriſtian way; and therefore plain, which Condition is the more Evangelical. The Caſe is ſo clear, that it muſt be concluded; if the Rich Man does not bring himſelf, by Self-denials, to live according to the Method of the Laborer, he will be but ill prepar'd to Appear at the Day of Accounts: And, hence it is, that thoſe Pious Souls, who ſeeing the Extravagancies of the World, are afraid of having a part in them, retire from it, and ſeek both Security and Perfection in obſerving the Rules of the Laboring Man; both in his Daily Employment, and Spare Diet, and Mean Dreſs. And as for thoſe, that ſtay behind, engag'd in a Worldly Life, 'tis moſt evident, if they propoſe not the ſame Rules, overcoming Idleneſs by Buſineſs, and the Exceſs of Ta-

ble and Cloaths by Moderation, they will neither be ſecure from Dangers, nor come up to that Perfection, which the Goſpel requires as neceſſary in all the Followers of Chriſt.

If there be any Truth in this, the Laboring Chriſtians may then ſee the Advantage of their Condition, in being oblig'd to ſuch a Method, which is moſt conformable to the Goſpel, and moſt helpful to Salvation; and that for the effectual obtaining this Happineſs, they need do no more than what their State obliges them to, but only do it in that Holy Diſpoſition of Spirit, as to make their Labors Chriſtian, and a Sacrifice Acceptable to God. In this the foregoing Inſtructions will be ſome help: but becauſe their Buſineſs may not allow the reading them often, I here add a ſhort Prayer, as an Abridgment of them, and if ſaid every Day, before they begin their Work, may be a means of Sanctifying all their Labors.

HERE in thy Preſence, O God, I acknowledge thy Juſtice in Commanding us to Labor, in Puniſhment of Sin; and in Obedience to thy Command, I willingly undertake the Work of

of this Day, and ſubmit to all the Trouble of it, as a Penance juſtly due to my Sins: Accept it, I beſeech thee, in Union with all the Labors of Chriſt, in the Work of my Redemption, and in Virtue of his Sacred Paſſion, may it be available for the diſcharge of that great Debt I have contracted by my manifold Offences.

I Confeſs likewiſe before thee, my great Weakneſs and Corruption, and being ſenſible, how dangerous Idleneſs would be to me, in leading me into the Occaſion of many Sins, I cheerfully undertake the Labor of this Day, as what thou, knowing my Infirmities, haſt mercifully appointed for me, as the beſt Preſervative from Evil: I thank thee for it, and hope, by thy Grace, it will have that Effect in me, which thou propoſeſt for my Good.

I acknowledge it again my Duty to provide Neceſſaries for Life, both for my ſelf, and thoſe that belong to me; this is an Obligation which Juſtice lays upon me; to ſatisfie this Duty, I willingly undertake the Work of this Day; give thou a Bleſſing to it, and ſince doing Juſtice is my motive, may it be available, not only for gaining Bread, but likewiſe in order to Eternal Life.

Preſerve me this Day from all Sin, give me Grace to reſiſt all the Occaſions of it: Govern my Tongue, and all my Paſſions, abide with me this Day and for Ever.

CHAP. XIV.

Inſtructions for Servants.

HAving diſcours'd more at large in another Treatiſe upon the Commandments, concerning the Obligations of Servants, Maſters, Parents, Shop-keepers, *&c.* I ſhall ſet down here only ſome particular Heads, which may be ſome help to thoſe, who may not have leiſure to read a larger Volume.

And now, as to Servants, their Life being generally Laborious, all that has been ſaid in the foregoing Chapter, may be Directions, how they are to Work, and how to Pray. Beſides theſe, there are ſome more particular Duties belonging to their State.

Firſt, Of *Reſpect* to thoſe, that are over them; and this obliges them to keep

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a watch over their Words and Actions, ſo as to ſay or do nothing which is not becoming their Condition. The Practice of this is principally when they are reprov'd; for then, whatever their inward diſturbance be, they ought to govern their Tongues, and avoid both Surly Looks and Anſwers; remembring the Advice given them by S. *Paul*, of *Not anſwering again*, eſpecially in ſuch a manner, as is likely to encreaſe their Diſpleaſure, who are already Angry with them.

There ſeems greater reaſon for this, when the Reproof is Juſt, and occaſion'd by ſome real Fault; for then they know for what they Suffer, and ought to Humble themſelves in Puniſhment of their Neglect. And yet they ought to do the ſame, when the Reprehenſion is undeſerved: For tho it may be allow'd in a word or two, and with Calmneſs to ſhew their Innocence; yet if they are not Believ'd, but are ſtill Reprov'd as Faulty; here they are to ſubmit with Patience, with hopes of having a part in the Reward promis'd to thoſe who ſuffer for Juſtice. This they are encourag'd to by S. *Peter*, 1 Ep. 2. 18, 19. as a thing moſt acceptable to God: And 'tis a Point

which Servants ought to be Induſtrious to learn, that ſo, having not ſo much time to employ in Prayer and Works of Charity, they may make out this way, what is wanting to them in others, and by Patient Suffering work out their Salvation.

This moderation in preſence of their Maſters, they are likewiſe to practiſe behind their Backs, by avoiding all manner of Diſcourſes or Complaints, which are Diſreſpectful; and being ſilent in every thing, that may be a leſſening to their Reputation, whom they ſerve: For beſides the want of Reſpect, there is ſomething of Treachery, in diſcovering the Secrets of the Family, of which they are a Part.

Secondly, Obedience in all Lawful Commands; becauſe all Power is from God, and ſuch ought to be eſteem'd the Power, which Maſters have over their Servants; upon which Conſideration, S. *Paul*, *Eph.* 6. requires them to be Obedient, not as to Men only, but as to God, by whoſe Power they Command. Now, as to the Manner, in which they ought to Obey, the ſame Apoſtle ſays it ought to be, *Cum bona Voluntate*: *With a good Will*; that is, readily and cheerfully. And here again,

gain, Servants have a great opportunity of gaining the favor of Heaven; for whereas in many Commands there is often a great deal of Humor and Paſſion, ſuch as may incline them to Contempt or Diſobedience, a ready Compliance, in Contradiction to all ſuch interior Motions of their own, muſt be a moſt acceptable Self-denial, ſuch as cannot fail of having its Reward. And this S. *Paul* puts them in mind of, when having requir'd Servants cheerfully to Obey, he bids them be aſſur'd, that according to the good they do, ſo they ſhall receive from God; reck'ning this ready Obedience amongſt the good things, which will have their Recompence in Heaven. And if Servants could ſhew this Obedience, not only to Eaſie, but to Harſh and Paſſionate Maſters, and even then Obſerve their Orders with Cheerfulneſs, when they ſee them mov'd only by Peeviſhneſs or Humor, this would certainly oblige Heaven to their Aſſiſtance; and as they have the Trials of a Noviceſhip, prepare them for the moſt Eminent Vertues, which are the Commendation of a Religious Life. And while all Servants being Subject, have it ſo often in their power to recommend

commend themſelves to God, in the practice of a Patient, and Humble Obedience; let them ſee, how much they loſe, in neglecting theſe Opportunities; by their Impatience and Humorſom Stubbornneſs, loſing firſt their own Inward Peace of Mind, and then their Peace with God.

Laſtly, Fidelity; by which they are oblig'd firſt to a careful performance of whatever Buſineſs they undertake. In this they are to follow the Direction given them by the Apoſtle, who requires them to perform every part of their Charge, not as ſerving the Eye of their Maſter, but as ſerving God; that is, to be as Diligent in their Service, when they have no Eye to overlook them, as when they have their Maſter Witneſs of what they do. And this is to bid them do all on the Motive of Juſtice, becauſe 'tis their Duty to do it, and God demands it of them. How happy would Servants be, could they practice this Leſſon, ſince thus they would not have their Wages the only Recompence of their Yearly Labor; but by doing all for God and Duty, might lay up a Treaſure in Heaven! And certainly unhappy are they, if prevail'd on by Sloth, they are no where

where Faithful, but when the fear of Reproof obliges them to it; for this is to Work only like the Beaſts, and in receiving their Wages have all their Reward; ſince God cannot be Engag'd by thoſe, who Work only for Fear, and not for Duty.

This Fidelity obliges Servants, Secondly, with Care to manage whatever is Entruſted with them; ſo that the Maſter be no loſer thro' their Neglect, or by their Converting what belongs to him to their own or any other's uſe, without his knowledge or leave. If Servants are not exact in this Point, they diſcharge not a good Conſcience, but offend againſt Juſtice. They muſt therefore conſider, what belongs to their Charge; and ſince many things both in Shops and Houſes are often Damag'd or Stoln, for want of due Care, they muſt be mindful, it belongs to them to prevent it; as alſo to ſee, that nothing be Waſted; becauſe they are to have the ſame Care of their Maſters Goods, as of their own. If Money be Entruſted with them, they muſt be Faithful in diſpoſing of it, according to Order, and in giving Account of what is Expended, without making any Advantage of it, and much leſs,

keeping

keeping any part to themſelves. If they are Induſtrious in Buying or Selling at a better rate than others, they muſt not Reward themſelves, but leave this to the Maſter's Bounty. And if at any time they make ill Bargains for their Maſter, for ſome Gain offer'd by thoſe, with whom they Trade, they may be aſſur'd, this is nothing leſs than Thieft, and they muſt be accountable for all ſuch unjuſt Gain. It is the ſame Crime, if they give away or diſpoſe of what belongs to him, without his permiſſion, tho' it be no Advantage to them, but only to treat or pleaſure their Acquaintance. And whenever they offend againſt theſe Duties of Fidelity, they muſt remember, it is not only an Offence againſt God, but ſuch an Offence, as obliges them to make Reſtitution of whatever wrong they have done their Maſter, and that if this be not done, if ever they are able, they cannot expect the Sin to be forgiven.

Theſe are the principal Duties belonging to Servants, which they are bound carefully to obſerve, becauſe they are the Obligations of their State, and if theſe are not ſatisfied, whatever other Virtues they may have, it is certain, they cannot be Good Chriſtians. But if they are ſtrict in the obſervance of them, it cannot

not be queſtion'd, but they have fair Opportunities of Saving their Souls; becauſe their whole Life is a perpetual Obedience, in ſubjection to another's Will, where beſides their Patience in Labors, they muſt practice many Self-denials, when the Commands, that call upon them, come often attended with Paſſion, and they muſt ſtand many Reproofs, when there is no other Provocation, beſides the fretful Humor of thoſe, that give it. But all that, which makes their Life difficult, may be improv'd into the Occaſions of Virtue; and 'tis thus they are to learn to be Wiſe, in gaining Heaven, by what renders their Life uneaſie on Earth, which they cannot fail in, if being Juſt in the Obligations of their State, they, in ſubmiſſion to the Divine Will, practiſe that Obedience, that Patience, Humility, Mortification and Meekneſs, to which their Condition of Life engages them.

For the better effecting this, there are ſome things to be recommended to them. Firſt, That they be well inſtructed in the Chriſtian Doctrin; becauſe, without this, they cannot have a true Senſe of their Eternal State, nor apprehend the neceſſity of taking pains for it. And how can it be expected, they ſhall learn to be Pa-

tient,

tient, Humble, *&c.* if they are not taught, how much it is their Intereſt to be ſo? It is their firſt Duty therefore, to contrive ſome Means for being well-inſtructed. Conſtant Buſineſs muſt be a great hindrance to many; but however they muſt not think themſelves excus'd on this account: For if it be their Duty to ſerve God, and ſave their Souls, it muſt be their Duty to learn how to do it, and this, in the Circumſtances, in which they are; for who knows, if ever they ſhall have better? If they find it difficult, this muſt be reckon'd amongſt the Difficulties of their State; they go thro' many for Bread, and they muſt go thro' this for Life Eternal, Induſtry overcomes all, and I am ſo far ſatisfied of its being ſufficient in this Point, that for as many, as are Ignorant, I make no queſtion of it being their Fault, who are ſo; ſince tho' others concern'd may have been wanting on their part; yet for them to live on in Ignorance, after they are grown up, is a Point can admit no excuſe: Becauſe ſuch Circumſtances can ſcarce be ſuppos'd, wherein a Servant, either by Books, or other help, may not find Means of being Inſtructed, if they are truly deſirous of it, and as Induſtrious in ſeeking it, as the Importance of the Concern requires.

Wherefore

Wherefore I cannot omit preſſing this with earneſtneſs to all in Service, to conſider what they want of Inſtruction, and not to let pretext of Buſineſs put them upon neglecting the Occaſions of learning their Duty, when with good Contrivance, other Buſineſs may be done, and this too: And for this they muſt be call'd to an Account by him, who knows all their Circumſtances, and will ſhew their general Excuſes to be the Effect of Sloth and Indifferency, ſuch as will have Confuſion and Terror in the Charge.

Secondly, They muſt be exact in their Prayers, as far as their Circumſtances will allow, and not loſe the Opportunity of theſe by unneceſſary Buſineſs, Converſation, Slothful Delays, or lying in Bed. And becauſe they have not the Command of their own Time, they muſt learn to Pray, even when they are at Work, by raiſing their Thoughts to God, ſince their Heart may be often at Liberty, when their Hands are engag'd in Work; or, which is better, they ought to make all their Labor to be Prayer, by Offering it all to God, in the manner taught them by S. *Francis Sales* in his *Introduction*, *Part* 3. *Chap.* 35. which Chapter I deſire them to read very often, ſo to make the beſt Advantage of all they do.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, They muſt be very careful in their Company and daily Converſation: For ſince there are many of their Rank, who being very Ignorant and Vicious, take great Liberties both in their Words and Actions, ſuch as are great Provocations to Sin, 'tis impoſſible for them to preſerve a good Conſcience, if they join in all that is ſaid or done, becauſe this will be evidently joining in Sin. And ſince this muſt not be, they are hence oblig'd to expreſs their diſlike of whatever is attempted of this kind, boldly condemning all that is diſorderly; for where all are Equals, Silence in this caſe muſt be a want of Courage, and ſuch as cannot well be Innocent, ſince 'tis generally interpreted as a Concurrence. Thoſe who come not up to this Rule, muſt be often in the Occaſions of Sin; becauſe thoſe, who are Vicious, think they have Encouragement enough, where they have no poſitive Oppoſition, and therefore in ſuch Company ſeem to be without reſtraint. Hence ſuch as deſire to be ſecure, upon the firſt appearance of Evil, ſhew their Averſion to it, and this ſo ſenſibly, as to make all know they are in earneſt, and that they will never bear, or even connive at ſuch Diſorders: And if this be but repeated, as occaſion ſhall offer,

offer, to ſhew the ſteddineſs of their Reſolutions, they will certainly find peace for themſelves and Company, in being a Check upon all thoſe, whoſe ungovern'd Inclinations lead them to Evil.

Laſtly, That they be very watchful againſt all Paſſions, but eſpecially, that of Anger and Fretfulneſs. Their Circumſtances put them often in Occaſions of being diſturb'd: For whether it be from the Uneaſie Temper and Endleſs Reproofs of thoſe that are over them, or from the diſagreeable and provoking Humors of their Companions, they often meet with Occaſions of raiſing their Paſſions; and if they have not the Art of Governing them, their inward Peace muſt be often diſturb'd, and all Comfort thus taken from them. And how unhappy then muſt their Lives be, when, thro' this frequent diſorder, they are robb'd of all Satisfaction within themſelves, and render'd uncapable of well performing any Duty either to God or Man! And if this World goes on, the next is certainly at a ſtand, ſince they can ſeldom compoſe their Minds enough for Prayer, and much leſs for Repentance. Wherefore ſince 'tis not always in their Power to change their Circumſtances, their Remedy muſt be, in Laboring to change themſelves,

and

and gaining ſo much Command, as not to let every Ordinary Provocation put them into a Paſſion. This is their Duty, as Chriſtians, who cannot poſſeſs their Souls, but by Patience; and if their Patience ought to be ſuch, as to ſuffer the greateſt Trials, with how much more Reaſon, are they bound to bear the Common Difficulties of Life? If they know the Advantage of Suffering with Patience, in ſubmiſſion to the Divine Will, or conſider'd the Puniſhment due to their daily Sins, they would certainly labor to ſuppreſs that Paſſion, which renders all their Suffering not only unprofitable, but ſinful: And ſomething might be done in this, would they but ſtrive in earneſt; for tho' the difficulty be great in overcoming an ill Cuſtom, yet all may be done with Labor and Time; and had they but one Sight of Hell to make them in earneſt, a ſhort time would ſhew them the good Effect of their Endeavors, and convince them of their Sloth, and want of Reſolution, being the true Reaſons of their Diſtemper abiding ſo long without Remedy.

Theſe are ſome Principal Rules, which, if Servants take care to follow, they may live like Saints in any Service, and prepare to be ſo for ever by thoſe Exer-

ciſes,

ciſes, which their Condition gives them: And if they obſerve them not; I think them very unhappy, in taking as much pains, as the ſtricteſt Religious, and making no other Advantage of what they do, beſides the Poor Wages they Yearly Receive, when with good Management, they might have Heaven for their Reward.

CHAP. XV.

Inſtructions for Maſters, &c.

THE firſt Duty of Maſters to Servants, is Juſtice, in the exact Payment of what is their due, according to Agreement made with them, and to be wanting in this, is a moſt ſinful Oppreſſion. And if Sickneſs diſables them for a time, here Juſtice preſſes in regard of ſome, and Charity of others, that due Care be had of them for their Recovery. 'Tis a Point, in which many are wanting; and is an Argument of a moſt Subſtantial Defect, ſince the Principles of the Goſpel are ſuch, that 'tis not to be apprehended, how thoſe can be good Chriſtians, who have

have not due Care and Compaſſion in time of their Servants Diſtreſs.

A ſecond Duty is that of Inſtruction, becauſe being under the Maſter's Care, and in ſome manner to be eſteem'd as Children, as the Scripture terms them, it is their Obligation, to ſee, they be duly taught whatever is neceſſary for Salvation. For this end, upon their Admittance examen ought to be made, how far they know, and Care taken for their being inſtructed, as ſhall be found neceſſary. And becauſe many of them are under great Diſadvantages, becauſe of their Education, it is not ſufficient to have them once inform'd of their Duty, but they are to be often called to an Account, to ſee, what Improvement they make, or how much they retain of what has been taught them, and ſuch Means provided, as may be anſwerable to their Neceſſities. Whence it muſt certainly be condemn'd as a Fault in thoſe, who allow no time to their Servants, in which they may learn at Home, or be inſtructed Abroad. The number of theſe, if one may gueſs by the general Ignorance of Servants, is very great. And tho' the common Plea for their Defence, is in the Multiplicity of Buſineſs, which will not allow them time; yet this Point ought to be

be well examin'd, to ſee, whether it will paſs with him, who is to be the Judge of all. They are to conſider, whether all that Buſineſs, in which they engage their Servants, be of that great Concern, that none of it can be excus'd at any time, upon the Conſideration of providing for their Eternal Good, who are under their Charge. Is all their Work of Neceſſity? Is not ſome, to ſatisfie Niceneſs and Humor? If ſome of it, upon Occaſion were omitted, would the Conſequence be ſo bad, as the want of Inſtruction in their Servants? In the one Caſe, they cannot be ſatisfied, if ſuch Work be not duly done by their Servants: On the other ſide, their Servant's Souls are in hazard, if Time be not found for Inſtruction. Which is of the greateſt Concern? Which ought to give place to the other? The Cauſe would ſoon be decided, were Charity and the Spirit of the Goſpel to ſpeak their Sentiments; and where 'tis not thus determin'd, is it not becauſe their Suggeſtions are ſtifled by a Covetous, Worldly, or Humorſom Spirit, which being bent, with too much Eagerneſs, on its own Ways, thinks theſe of the greateſt Concern, and cannot apprehend any thing beſides of ſo much weight, as to oblige them to give it place. Hence the leaſt Intereſt

and

and moſt inconſiderable things have the Preference to their Servants Souls, and they can have more Peace with their Servants Souls, than their Walls or Boards being in Diſorder.

Now I do not preſs in this, that the Work, for which Servants are hir'd, ſhould be left undone; but that, with ſome good Contrivance, Time be found for their Inſtruction; becauſe this is an Obligation, which God lays on them, in Regard of their Servants, and therefore ought to be ſatisfied: And it being a Point of Concern, if ſometimes ſome other Work, which is not of Neceſſity, were adjourn'd, or let alone, it would be no more, than what the Order of Charity requires, which having Compaſſion on Servants, will provide for their Eternal Welfare, and eſteem it no Loſs, if ſome other Buſineſs of an inferior Concern, be omitted on this Account: And the ſame Charity will give Direction to Chriſtians, (if ſhe be admitted to the Conſult) when they determine, *What Work is neceſſary*, not to conſider only the Earneſtneſs, with which they are bent upon it; but rather, what will be the real Harm, if for once it be left undone.

This Solicitude, which Maſters, *&c.* ſhould have for their Servant's Inſtruction,

on, ſhould be extended ſomething farther, that is, in ſeeing they have time for ſaying their Prayers, for frequenting the Sacraments at due times, and for keeping *Sundays* and Holy-days; ſo that they loſe not the Benefit, which God and his Church have deſign'd for them in theſe Inſtitutions. 'Tis a hard Caſe to think, that thoſe, who by their ill Circumſtances, are oblig'd to Toil for Bread, ſhould have ſuch Advantage taken of their neceſſitous Condition, as to be tied to work like Beaſts, without having Time allow'd them, for asking God to have Mercy on them; but to live on, as if they had neither Faith, nor Souls, nor Eternity to provide for. 'Tis again as hard, that being exercis'd with Difficult Trials, and ſubject to many Weakneſſes, they cannot have Opportunities of ſeeking help and ſtrength from God, in the Sacraments, which by the Divine Bounty, are ordain'd as much for their Relief, as for others of a better Condition: But that by a kind of Spiritual Oppreſſion, they are ſo ſtreightn'd, as ſeldom to have leiſure to go to them, and when they go, are forced to do all in ſuch a Hurry, ſo as to have neither time to prepare, as they ought, nor to make any Recollection for receiving the Benefit of what they

do. There is little leſs unhappineſs, in having no Days of Reſt, either for Soul or Body, but that, on all Days, they are ſo buſied with this World, as to have no time to think of the next.

Theſe are their greateſt Misfortune, who are in ſuch ill Circumſtances, and have no help for themſelves; but as to the guilt, I cannot but think, Maſters *&c.* have generally a greater ſhare in it, than the Servants; and that 'tis their Duty to Remedy it, what they can: All cannot eaſily be done, as could be deſir'd; but ſomething may be, by ſuch as truly conſider, how valuable a Soul is, and how much ought to be done for its Salvation. Theſe will examin the Hours of going to Bed and Riſing; and ſee, whether Servants have time for beginning the Day with Prayer: And if it be then wanting, to ſupply it at leaſt by Family-Prayer, when all meet in common, for paying a Common Homage to God. They will obſerve, what order Servants keep in going to the Sacraments, and to contrive it, that they have due time for the well performing thoſe Duties: As likewiſe, that they have ſome leiſure on *Sundays* and Holy-days, for applying their Thoughts to the Work of their Salvation.

This

This they will effect, by abating ſomething of the uſual Duties of other Days, and keeping to the Rule, Of doing nothing on ſuch Days, but what is really neceſſary. They will conſider ſuch Days, to be Days for Souls, and not for Houſes; and that if Walls and Boards are taken Care of all the Week, Souls ought to be taken Care of on *Sundays* and Holy-days: And on this Conſideration, will excuſe all that can be of the uſual Work. This many cannot eaſily perſwade themſelves to, becauſe of Education and Cuſtom, that prevail upon them, and they know not how to omit, what a long Practice makes them duly expect: But when they conſider, that the great Work on *Sundays* and Holy-days, is chiefly occaſion'd by Vanity, Pride, Gluttony, and Niceneſs; and that, were not Servants taken up in providing for theſe, they would have time enough for their more important Duties: When they reflect again, how little this anſwers the deſign of keeping ſuch Days Holy; and that it muſt be a great Abuſe, to have theſe Days diſtinguiſh'd from others, by making better proviſion for the Houſe, Belly and Back, and the Buſineſs of Salvation (for which they were principally inſtituted) to be neglected on this account; hence they

may conclude upon changing this Method, and in the firſt place, begin to take Care, that ſomething be retrench'd of that uſual Work, which Vanity, *&c.* find for Servants on *Saturday* Nights and Vigils, to keep them up ſo late, as not only to labor beyond the time preſcrib'd, but to oblige them to ſpend a great part of the next Morning in Bed, to recover the Sleep, that was loſt. They may take another ſtep, in reforming upon Vanity, in being contented themſelves to ſerve God in what is Clean and Decent, without employing the Morning, in being ſet out for a ſhew; for that, as this is not ſuitable to the Humility of the Goſpel, nor to the Worſhip of a Crucified Redeemer; ſo it muſt be injurious to the Day, and to Servants, to take up their time in ſuch Preparations. Again, they may abate ſomething of Sweeping and Cleaning the Houſe; for that this having been done the Day before, it is more agreeable to the time, to be then buſie in purifying their Souls. Then, as for the Table, they may contrive what is neceſſary for Subſiſtance, in ſuch a manner, as requires the leaſt attendance of Servants, that ſo, that time may not be given to Senſuality or Gluttony, which God has reſerv'd to himſelf: Therefore they ought not

not to make theſe, Days of Entertainments, except only for ſuch, who will be content with a Dinner, without ſpending the Afternoon at the Table. And as for what is to be Clean'd, this may be reſerv'd for the Buſineſs of the following Day, that thoſe Servants, who have been employ'd in the Morning, may have time for Prayer and Inſtruction in the Afternoon, which they generally want more than others. They may contrive again more time for Servants, by not admitting Viſits, nor going themſelves abroad on thoſe Days, at leaſt, till the Duties, which belong to them, are diſcharg'd: For tho' doing otherwiſe, brings no labor with it, yet it is a hindrance to Servants, and puts by what might be more for their Advantage.

By theſe, and ſuch other ways, Chriſtians, whoſe Charity makes them Solicitous for the Salvation of all under Care, find time for their Servants, wherein they may look into the State of their Souls, and make all neceſſary Proviſion for them. And tho' this be effected, by departing from the common Method of the World, yet ſince 'tis departing from nothing, but the Corruption of it, in favor of thoſe Rules, which the Goſpel preſcribes; ſince 'tis departing from Pride

and Exceſs, for the Improvement of Vertue, they think it very well becoming their Profeſſion, who believing the next Life to be Eternal, ought to be more zealous in preparing for Eternity, than in complementing Self love, and the World, with the hazard of all that is to come.

A Third Duty is Admonition, by which Maſters are oblig'd to be watchful over their Servants; and if they obſerve any thing diſorderly, to give them reproof, according to deſert. The greateſt part are ſharp enough in Faults, wherein they are concern'd; but few expreſs a Zeal for God, in reprehending what is diſpleaſing to him. And yet thus it ought to be; for ſince Maſters, *&c.* have not only the Charge, but alſo Command of their Family under God, 'tis moſt certain, they are accountable for all the Sins, which are the effect of their Connivance or Neglect. Wherefore, upon perceiving any Diſorder, whether in Words or Actions, they muſt conſider it their Duty to reform it; they are to try all Means, firſt of Charitable and Repeated Advice, then of Reproof, Threats, and Diſcouragements, and whatever other Expedients may be ſuitable to their Circum-

Circumſtances : And if, after ſufficient Trial, ſuch as Charity preſcribes for their Amendment, they prove Obſtinate, the Family ought to be clear'd of their ill Example, by a Removal. The Change is often of thoſe, who are not found fit for Service ; and is there not more reaſon, when Prophaneneſs or notorious Irregularities diſturb all Diſcipline, and may become as an Infection to the whole Family ?

In this Caſe therefore, Chriſtian Zeal allows of ſome Severity ; but in all others, Moderation is more to be Encourag'd, at leaſt, in ſuch a manner, that tho' Servants may have their Overſights and Neglects, and for theſe may deſerve reproof, they be not however treated like Brutes or Slaves. This Rule is neceſſary for ſome, whoſe Paſſion is ſo eaſily provok'd, that they ſeem to think no others to have any feeling beſides themſelves, and therefore beſtow their Irreligious Threats and Blows ſo freely, as if reſolv'd, that none ſhould be in Peace, while they themſelves are in Diſorder This is a Temper ſo contrary to the Chriſtian Spirit, and ſo pernicious in its effects, by deſtroying all Peace, and putting all concern'd in an Incapacity of doing

ing any Duty well, that thoſe, who are ſubject to it, have reaſon to labor for Moderation, for their own and others ſakes, who live under their Roof. 'Tis likewiſe neceſſary for thoſe, who being of an Uneaſie, or too Nice a Temper, can look no where, but they find matter of reproof, and hence are ſo fruitful in their chiding Lectures, that they either keep Servants upon a continual Fret, or Oblige them, for their own Peace, not to value what they Hear. This is a way convenient for neither ſide, by making all Uneaſie, and particularly tempting Servants to be Careleſs, whilſt they ſee, nothing gives Content, whatever they do. But however I do not except, in this, againſt all Reproofs, but only deſire, they may be ſeaſonable: Faults and Neglects ought to be reprehended; and yet Forbearance is ſometimes Adviſeable; one Word is Spur enough to many; and peaceably ſhewing a Fault will go farther with moſt, than an Angry and Publick Reproof. If ſome deſerve this, it ought not to be us'd with all: Becauſe Paſſion raiſes Averſion, and Moderation cauſes Eſteem and Love, and the Effects of theſe are the more laſting. Wherefore, ſince

Meek-

Meekneſs is ſo much advis'd by the Goſpel, it ought to be the general Rule, and great dependance ought to be in his Bleſſing, who gives the Advice. And if all things are not exact according to Wiſh, yet there will be Peace in a Family, which of all other things is moſt deſirable, and has much the Preference, to all Impatience, Fretfulneſs and Paſſion, which undertaking to remedy what is diſlik'd, has one certain effect, in putting all into diſorder, but commonly fail in what they otherwiſe propoſe. One thing I can ſay with certainty, that where Servants live under the Government of Paſſion, they are ſeldom in a good Humor, which is a great hindrance in their Service, and makes way for new Faults; and as for the Affairs of their Souls, they are under a general Neglect, becauſe of the diſcompoſure of Mind, which renders them unfit for all Spiritual Duties. And tho' they are not to be wholly excus'd in this; yet Chriſtian Charity ought to have ſome Compaſſion on their Weakneſs, and ſtudy ſuch a peaceable way of Reproving Faults, as not to put them out of the way of being Chriſtians, whilſt it endeavors to make them good Ser-

vants. This I ſay in regard of thoſe, who are to be wrought upon by fair means, as I hope moſt are; but as to thoſe whoſe Obſtinate or Slothful Temper makes void all Admonitions, after a ſufficient Experience of them, 'tis better they be remov'd, than to let a Family be in a perpetual Diſorder upon their account.

A Fourth Duty is Good Example, which is the ſureſt way for keeping Order in a Family, and will give the beſt Authority to all Reproofs. The want of this is the Ruin of many Servants, who conſidering thoſe over them as their Head, naturally receive Impreſſions from whatever they do. Whence all Heads of Families, as they are Chriſtians, and have a concern for their own Souls, ought to be very Regular in all they do; becauſe the Poſt, in which they are, makes them Remarkable; and the Weakneſs of thoſe under their Care is ſuch, as to be inclin'd to follow without Scruple where they ſee the Track made by thoſe, who ſhould Guide. And hence, who can imagin, how their Sins are multiplied in their Servants, who give ill Example to them? How is Prophaneneſs, Luxury, Intemperance, Paſſion, Vanity,

ty, *&c.* by this way propagated? How is a Neglect of God, and of all Chriſtian Duties by this Method encourag'd? And to what a Sum muſt the Account ſoon riſe, which is Daily Multiplied by ſo many Additions? Let thoſe conſider it, who are concern'd, and, for their own ſakes, learn to be Watchful, ſince they muſt needs ſee their Example to be ſo fruitful: And if their Servants are better than they, let them remember, 'tis a very unbecoming Priviledge of Maſters, *&c.* in orderly Families, to be the only Perſons, that obſerve no Order.

CHAP. XVI.

Inſtructions for Parents.

I Have ſaid ſo much to theſe in other places, that tho' for Order ſake I here muſt add ſomething, it ſhall be with a ſparing Hand.

Firſt, They are to remember their General Duty; that their Children are their Charge, of which they muſt render an Account to God; and for this end,

end, they are bound to be very Careful of them in their Infancy; to give them good Education, as they come to the uſe of Reaſon; be Watchful of all their Ways in their Youth; be Induſtrious in making due Proviſion for them; be Diſcreet in diſpoſing of them, and ſettling them in a Chriſtian State of Life; and as long as they live, be ever Solicitous in giving all the good Advice their Circumſtances ſhall require; and for Parents to be wanting in any of theſe Points, is certainly Criminal, becauſe 'tis to be wanting in the Obligations of their State.

The Infancy is principally the Mother's Care; ſhe is to Feed her Children at her own Breaſt, as God and Nature have Ordain'd it; and neither Senſuality nor Love of Eaſe are ſufficient Exceptions againſt this Duty. But if want of Strength diſpences with it, the Courſe of Nature ſeems to require, that the Mother ſhould then ſupply with her Hand, what ſhe cannot do with her Breaſt. If, upon ſufficient Trial, a Child will not Feed, a Nurſe is to be provided, and this under the Mother's Eye, if poſſibly it may be; that ſo the Child may have the Mother's Care, which cannot eaſily be Supplied, in that

that tender Age, by a Stranger's Hand. And if Neceſſity oblige it to be put out, ſuch an one ought to be look'd for, whoſe Diligence is moſt likely to ſupply the Mother's Abſence. One would think this Advice were not neceſſary for Parents; and yet to ſee the ſtrange Miſcarriages of Children in Nurſes Hands, which are the effect of nothing, but Careleſneſs, there is reaſon enough to fear, they are not ſufficiently Solicitous in their Choice, or not duly watchful in viſiting them, and obſerving their Management. Thoſe, who will but reflect, how many Children are Diſabled, Lam'd, brought into Diſtempers, ill Conſtitutions, and often to untimely Death, by this way of turning Children out of Doors, muſt conclude, that thoſe who do it without Neceſſity, cannot be eſteem'd Guiltleſs, but are to Anſwer for the Conſequence of their Sloth, Self love, Neglect or Indiſcretion.

When Children are come to the uſe of Reaſon, tho' they depend moſt on the Mother's Management, yet the Father is to have an Eye upon them. And ſince they are capable of being injur'd by Neglect, Harſhneſs, and immoderate Love, Parents ought to be

Watch-

Watchful againſt both Extremes, and keep ſuch an even Hand, that while they pretend to Reward what is good in them, they give not Encouragement to what is Evil, or at leaſt ſo in its Conſequence. Paſſion and Severity in Parents is Unnatural, it diminiſhes their Childrens Love, and breeds them up by degrees to a uſeleſs Tameneſs of Spirit, or to Obſtinacy and Contempt of all Advice and Correction. Exceſſive Fondneſs has its Miſchiefs too, it being the ready way to make Children Wilful, Paſſionate and Imperious, and never to be in a good Humor, longer than they have all their Wiſhes ſatisfied; the Conſequences of which Education are afterwards ſo prejudicial to Chriſtianity, and all future Peace, that thoſe Parents, who have any Foreſight of them, will rather chuſe to moderate, and do violence to their own Inclinations, for their Childrens good, than by yielding to Self-love, and their preſent Paſſion, run ſo great a hazard of making them Unhappy both in this World and the next. The great difficulty Fond Parents have, is to be perſwaded they are ſo; and to convince them of it, is a Task I dare not undertake, becauſe their immoderate Paſſion baffles

baffles the force of Demonſtration But however, I'll venture to lay before them ſome Symptoms of this Evil.

Firſt, If they are very Partial in the diſtribution of their Love. Secondly, If they are unwilling to ſee their Childrens Faults, and hear thoſe with diſlike, who undertake to ſhew them. Thirdly, If the fear of loſing their Childrens Love, ties up their Hands from giving due Correction. Fourthly, If they have not their Children at Command, but are Commanded by them. Fifthly, If they are ever ready to favor all their Deſires, and judge them Reaſonable. Sixthly, If they generally bear with preſent faults, on pretext of Reforming them hereafter. Seventhly, If their great Concern be in ſtudying how to pleaſe them, and think no Expence too much in Courting their Humor. Eighthly, If they permit them to be diſorderly, and generally Rude in their Preſence, and over-look in their own Children what they Daily condemn in their Neighbors. Ninthly, If they provide not for their due Inſtruction, according to their Capacity ; but differ this for fear of making them uneaſie : Or chuſe to let them grow up Blockheads at Home, rather than to be taught

taught to be Men and Chriſtians, out of their ſight.

Theſe are Signs of Blind Love, or the Effects of Self-love in Parents, which puts them upon pleaſing themſelves, tho' at the Price of their Childrens Ruin, which they will not ſee, that they may not be oblig'd to deny themſelves in renouncing their preſent Satisfaction. But there is ſo much of Paſſion in all theſe particulars, that as they obſerve it in others, ſo 'tis very diſcernable in them by every Indifferent Eye: And there is no help for preventing the Miſchiefs of it, but by their taking a more Rational and Diſcreet Method, which may be compriz'd in a few Words, and that is; by keeping their Children under Command. For if Children are ſo orderly, as to take their Parents Favors with Thanks, and to receive their Denials with Content or Submiſſion; ſo that the Parents Will is their Rule, then 'tis evident, they are under Government, even that, which Nature, Reaſon and God have ordain'd; and if there be any Diſorder, 'tis not the Effect of Fondneſs, but of Indiſcretion. And if they are not in this Diſciplin, which may be obſerv'd by Strangers in one half

Hour,

Hour, who preſently ſee, whether the Parents or Children Govern; then the Order of Nature, Reaſon and God is diſturb'd, and of what can this be the Effect, but of Paſſion?

When Children are grown up, and have now Reaſon to help them, this is ſo imperfect, that they ſtand more in need of their Parents Care, than before; becauſe all Miſcarriages are now of more dangerous Conſequence. At this Age it is, they are to be ſeaſon'd with ſound Principles of Morality, and Train'd up in Piety; great Choice is to be had of their Companions, and they are to be early Inſtructed in the Art of Employing themſelves. To learn to Read and Work well is neceſſary for all degrees, it being afterwards a great help to Virtue, and if not for a Livelihood, is neceſſary for their living as Good Chriſtians. Soon after comes the care of preparing them for the World. Thoſe of a Moderate Fortune muſt look for Services or Trades, and in our Corrupt Age, ſuch Families ought to be found, as are well Diſciplin'd and Examplar, leaſt in learning to gain their Bread, they be taught to loſe their Souls. And 'tis not enough to have once put them out; but, conſidering

ſidering the Inconſtancy and Indiſcretion of their Years, with the danger of Vicious Companions, they are to be Recommended to ſome Charitable Friend, who may often Viſit them, inſpect their Conduct, ſee they be exact in the Duties of their Place and Exerciſes of Religion, and be ever watchful upon any falſe ſtep, to make them ſenſible of their Neglect, Raſhneſs or Folly, before they are gone too far and may prove Irrecoverable.

Thoſe of a better Condition are to have ſtill greater Care, becauſe their Circumſtances expoſe their Children to greater Dangers. 'Tis no eaſie Task, amidſt great Plenty, to preſerve Youth from the love of Vanity, Idleneſs, Intemperance, and a Thouſand other Extravagancies; and when they are at Years of going abroad without a Witneſs, who ſhall then ſecure them againſt the Vices of the Age, when 'tis hard finding Perſons agreeable for their Diverſion, but 'tis odds, they meet with thoſe, whoſe looſe Principles will lead them to Immorality or Atheiſm? Theſe are now ſo Modiſh, that their profeſs'd Abettors appear Bare-faced almoſt in all Company; and thoſe, who know, how contagious Converſation

on is, have Reaſon to apprehend the infection, where there is ſo much Paſtime and Wit to Court a Youthful Phancy, and be Advocates in their Cauſe. Here then muſt be the Care of Parents of this degree, to provide againſt theſe hazards, by a Solid Education of their Children, by teaching them to love Buſineſs and Virtue ſo, as to deteſt Idleneſs and Prophaneneſs, and ver to be pleas'd with any Company, who know not how to be Merry, but in making War againſt Heaven. If this be not done, I think their Caſe as deſperate, as of thoſe, who are Thrown into the Sea; for certainly this preverſe World is as an Ocean of Iniquity, and 'tis as natural for thoſe to ſink who ſtep helpleſs into it, as for thoſe, who are caſt into the Sea.

To make Proviſion again for Children, is another Duty of Parents, that after a Tender Education, they may not be expos'd to the dangerous Conſequences of Neceſſity, and fence themſelves againſt Poverty by Iniquity. When Misfortunes or Oppreſſion diſable them from making this Proviſion, Confidence is to be placed in him, who has undertaken the Protection of the Afflicted: But if Parents diſable them-

themſelves by their Exceſſes, Prodigality, or other Extravagancies, this is ſuch an unnatural Crime, and attended with ſo many diſmal Conſequences, that, it may be, there is ſcarce another to compare with it, either in the Number of its daily encreaſing Sins, or in the difficulty of obtaining Pardon. For when we conſider Children robb'd of their Bread, turn'd out of Doors, expos'd to the World; ſome of them groaning under the weight of a long Neceſſity, neither provided with Conveniencies in time of Health, nor with Neceſſaries in Sickneſs; others oblig'd to the hardſhips of Service; and others ſeeking Remedy againſt theſe Evils, by Selling themſelves to Sin, and letting their Souls be the Purchaſe of Bread; and then Reflect, that this has not been done by an Enemy or Stranger, but by a Parents Hand, by thoſe, that brought them into the World, and were oblig'd to love and take Care of them by all the Laws of God, of Nature, and of Nations; is not there ſomething ſo Barbarous and Inhuman in this, that when we look on Pirates, Cheats, Thieves, and even Murtherers, they all ſeem Innocent in Compariſon of theſe? What if they had Cut their Chidrens Throats,

Throats, Ripp'd up their Bowels, Daſh'd out their Brains, with their own Hands, as ſoon as they had been Born; it might have look'd more Cruel, but who can ſay, it would have been a greater Sin? And yet how many Parents are engag'd in this Inhumanity, whilſt at their Bottels and Games, at Plays and Entertainments, they ſport away all the Comfort of their Families, and rob their Children, to feed their Folly, Luxury or Ambition?

Another way many Parents are wanting to this Duty, at leaſt in regard of their Younger Children, by not making timely Settlements by Deed or Will, and after many delays, at length Dying Inteſtate, leave them to the Charity and Compaſſion of their Elder Brother, or Mother, which if it reaches ſofar, as to find them Bread, is not always ſo Liberal, as to make them a Proviſion ſuitable to their Education; but often leaves them to Hardſhip and Miſery; which, tho' not excuſable in the Widow or Heir, is yet a greater Crime in the Father, who is oblig'd to prevent all ſuch Miſcarriages, by a timely Care. And tho' in time of his Health, this looks like no more than an Ordinary Neglect, or the Effect of Humor

mor or Fear; yet whatever it be, ſince the uncertainty of Life makes it often the Occaſion of his Childrens Miſery, both as to Body and Soul, he is bound to overcome himſelf for its Prevention, and the Omiſſion or unneceſſary Delay cannot but be Criminal in him.

Laſtly, When Children are to be diſpos'd of, 'tis the Parents Duty to be Solicitous in doing it ſo, that it may be for their well-being here and hereafter. There is to be a Concern as to this World, which is ſeldom wanting; but their greater Concern is to be, as to the next; and if due conſideration be not had of this, Parents may eaſily draw upon themſelves the Guilt of their Childrens Souls. Wherefore tho' Honor and Wealth may lawfully have place in their Conſults on this ſubject, yet if theſe prevail ſo far, that for Intereſt or State, they ſuſpend all other Conſiderations, and with them come to an Agreement; 'tis plain they have not Acted as Chriſtians, who in a matter of this Concern, have had no Care of the better part, and left out God in a Buſineſs, wherein he ought to have had the Firſt place. And if afterwards their Children become Miſerable, thro' the

Diſ-

Diſorders within their own Doors being brought into thoſe Diſquiets, as to be put by all the Duties of Salvation, or brought to an untimely Death by Immoderate Grief or other Diſtemper, will not an Account be Demanded of their Parents, who raſhly put them into theſe unhappy Circumſtances? Thoſe, who are acquainted with the World, know, that State and Wealth are no Priviledge againſt Misfortunes, that there may be variety of unhappineſs amidſt plenty, and that many other Particulars are to be conſider'd, to make up the happineſs of a Married State. What then muſt be ſaid of Parents, who in ſettling their Children, have no regard to theſe, but that they are Unnatural, in being no more concern'd for their good, Unchriſtian, in having no regard to their Peace of Soul, and putting them in the way of Salvation, and that often, they are as much their Murtherers, as if they had ſet them out with the Richeſt Ornaments, and a great Retinue, to throw them afterwards a Prey to Lions or Bears.

Theſe are ſome of the Duties of Parents, beſides many others, which are ſo very difficult, that to diſcharge them well, they require the greateſt helps

helps of Diſcretion and Grace. Wherefore thoſe, who enter into this State, have great Reaſon to beg the Bleſſing of Heaven, firſt to direct them in their Choice, and then to Accompany them thro' all the Difficulties of their Condition; for there are ſo many Miſcarriages, to which they are expos'd, ſo many Evils they have to Remedy, ſo many to bear in Silence, that Prudence, and Watchfulneſs and Courage, and Patience, are abſolutely neceſſary for them: And whence ſhall theſe Gifts come, if they ſeek them not from God? Upon which conſideration, I think all in this State have great Reaſon to be Faithful and Exact in all the Duties of Religion, and Zealous in thoſe ways, which are moſt Effectual for obliging Heaven to their Aſſiſtance; that by their dependance on a better Hand, they may be provided for all Exigencies, and not ſeek Eaſe by an Indifferency of Spirit or Neglect, nor be overwhelm'd by an Exceſs of Concern. Theſe muſt not therefore think, that Exactneſs in Religious Duties is the Province of ſuch, as are retir'd in Cloyſters, but not of thoſe, who by many Ties are link'd to the World; for if the Exerciſe of Religion be an Expedient

pedient for obtaining the Grace of God, and all Supernatural Helps proportion'd to our Wants; they ought to be moſt Faithful in them, whoſe Dangers and Wants are greateſt. And who now, that has a Knowledge of both States, will tell me, that the Difficulties, Dangers and Wants of thoſe in the World, are not greater, than of thoſe in the Cloyſter? What is the Obedience and Mortifications of a Cloyſter, which have Regularity and Example to make them eaſie in Compariſon of that Compliance neceſſary in a Married Life, which not being govern'd by Rule, but by the Inconſtancy of Humor, never knows in the Morning, how low it muſt bend before Night? How many Self-denials muſt here be, when Extravagance or Vice, brings Miſchiefs on thoſe, whom they love moſt, and threatens Ruin to themſelves and Family? What are the Mortifications of Children becoming ungovernable, taking ill Ways, and living in ſuch a Courſe, as muſt bring Body and Soul to Deſtruction? Then as to Dangers, the Walls of a Cloyſter are a Fence againſt a great part of thoſe, which are unavoidable by ſuch as live in the World. And if we compare, the little Buſineſs of a Recluſe, whoſe Con-

cern is ſcarce extended beyond himſelf, with the endleſs Solicitude of thoſe, who having a Family on their Hands, are to give an Account, not only of themſelves, but of their Children, Servants of all under their Roof, and of the Eſtate entruſted with them; we ſhall find the Care of a Married Life to be much greater, than that of a Religious; and ſince its Difficulties and Dangers are ſo too, may not we with Evidence conclude, the Grace of God to be in a particular manner neceſſary to this State? And if the Means ordain'd for obtaining it, be a Fidelity in the Worſhip and Service of God, and Diligence in making uſe of thoſe Helps appointed by the Divine Goodneſs for this End, are not thoſe engag'd in a Married State ſtrictly oblig'd to this Fidelity and Diligence, that ſo they may obtain Aſſiſtance proportion'd to their Wants? This then we muſt ſet down, as a General Duty of all in this Condition of Life. 'Tis their Intereſt to diſcharge it, that ſo they may have ſome help to anſwer their Neceſſities. They know, all Miſcarriages are occaſion'd by the want of Diſcretion and Grace; hence ſpring the Diſorders and Ruin of ſo many Families, both as to Children

and

and Eſtates; and if Diſcretion and Grace are the Gifts of God, how are they to obtain, who ſeek them not as they ought? Wherefore, upon the whole, I conclude with this Queſtion; Whether, conſidering all the Difficulties of a Married Life, thoſe engag'd in it, are not oblig'd, for their own Intereſt, to be as faithfully exact in all the Exerciſes and Duties of Religion, proportion'd to their Circumſtances, as thoſe, who live retir'd in a Cloyſter?

CHAP. XVII.

Inſtructions for Shopkeepers, Traders, &c.

ONE would think there needed not much Advice to this Rank of Chriſtians, who being generally in a Mean betwixt great Plenty and Want, are deliver'd from the Dangers of both theſe Extreams; and yet fenc'd as they are, they have their Dangers too, and ſuch as require as great a Stock of Virtue for their Security, as any other State whatever: What theſe Dangers

are, will appear from the following Inſtructions.

Firſt, They are to be careful, not to expoſe any thing to Sale, which is Sinful, that is, directly and profeſſedly Contributing to Sin. In this ſome Trades are more concern'd than others: As thoſe, who make or ſell Pictures, are oblig'd, by this Rule, not to ſell Pictures, that are Immodeſt, or ſuch as are deſign'd to bring a Contempt on Virtue, Religion or Magiſtrates. Thoſe who Trade in Books, are bound not to ſell ſuch, the Subject of which are for the ſame unchriſtian Ends; or others, which promote or abet Vice or Error. The Age in which we are, ſo favorable to Libertiniſm, Atheiſm, Socinianiſm, *&c.* is very fruitful in theſe unhappy Products; and the number of either Curious or Corrupt Buyers are enough to Encourage a Trade this way: And yet, it being evident, that expoſing ſuch to Sale, is directly Contributing to the Propogation of thoſe contagious Principles, which they Maintain, it is certain, none can help to diſperſe them, without partaking in the guilt of the Writers. This Caſe is clear in Politics, whilſt every Government is alike Severe upon the Writers, Printers and Pub-

Publiſhers of Seditious Libels, and upon this concludes them all to be under the ſame Guilt, and alike Enemies of the State. And muſt it not be eſteem'd the ſame, in our Caſe by all thoſe, who have a Zeal for Virtue or Truth? For how can they be ſuppos'd ſincere Profeſſors of the Goſpel, who help to ſpread ſuch Writings, as are directly levell'd againſt it? They who charge the Cannon or lay the Train, and they, who give Fire to it, are equally Criminal, when 'tis deſign'd for Miſchief, or in an ill Cauſe. Therefore, as a Loyal Subject cannot anſwer the promiſcuous Selling a Libel againſt the Government, ſo neither can a Sincere Chriſtian the Selling ſuch Books, as are for the overthrow of Piety and Religion. And if there be any Diſpenſation in this Rule, it muſt be only ſuch as is allow'd to thoſe, who Sell Poyſon, which is not to be put promiſcuouſly into all Hands, who ask for it; but ſuch only, in whom they have a Confidence of their not abuſing it.

I am ſenſible, how little agreeable this Reſtraint is to their Intereſt; and that, tho' they concur not in the Spreading ſuch contagious Ware, yet the thing will be done by other Hands: But however, neither Plea can juſtifie the

Fact: For tho' they open Shop for a Livelihood, and ought to be Induſtrious in making an Advantage by their Trade; yet in this, as well as in all other Actions, they are to be regulated by Principles of Juſtice to their Neighbor, and Duty to their God; where Gain is conſiſtent with theſe, it is very allowable; but when it is to come, by the Tranſgreſſion of them, Chriſtians are bound to forego all ſuch Intereſt, rather than Tranſgreſs their Duty. And if this be not their Rule, then God is not their Rule, but Intereſt only, and they may find a way for doing any Injuſtice, whenever they can be Gainers by it. And tho' while Duty Ties their Hands, the thing will be done by others; what then? Becauſe others will do what is Evil, does this give them any Right, or can it juſtifie them in doing the ſame? Chriſt ſays Scandals will come; and does this excuſe thoſe, by whom they come? No; he ſays, *Wo to the Man, by whom Scandal comes*: So it is here: There will be always ſome, who will make a Gain, by doing what is unjuſt; but this is ſo far from giving Authority, for the doing it, that we may truly ſay, Wo to all thoſe, who do ſo.

Secondly, They muſt be Juſt to their Neigh-

Neighbors, in what they Sell; over-reaching him in no kind, nor uſing any ſort of Fraudulent Dealing. They muſt not uſe Falſe Weights or Meaſures; for this is an Abomination to our Lord. They muſt not put off and commend ill Wares for good, for this is lying and deceiving; and if they take for ſuch, the full Price of what is good, it is Cheating too, in taking Money for what in reality they do not Sell. Neither is it ſufficient, that the Buyer Conſents to the Price; for if they take an Advantage of his Unskilfulneſs, his Indiſcretion undertaking to Buy what he underſtands not, does not juſtifie them in taking more Money, than the Goods are Worth; but 'tis ſtill a Cheat in them, that Sell, who Firſt impoſe on him, and then receive Money, for what, they know, they do not give him. This Sin is much Exaggerated, if they Confirm their Words by repeated Oaths, ſo to gain Credit to what they ſay; becauſe this is nothing leſs then Perjury; 'tis Selling their Souls with their Goods; and how eaſie a Bargain do they let the Devil have, in putting their Souls into his Hands, only for drawing a little more Money out of the Chapman's Pocket!

But may not Tradeſmen then uſe Art

for ſetting off their Goods, and concealing their Faults?

The Art of ſetting off Goods to the beſt Advantage is very allowable; but if by ſuch Art, they ſo conceal their Faults, as to make them paſs for good, when they are not ſo, this is not according to that Sincerity, which the Goſpel demands of its Profeſſors; and tho' they take not the Price of what is good, but only proportion'd to their Value; yet they impoſe on the Buyer, by not putting ſuch Goods into his Hands, as he asks for and wants, and, it may be, ſuch, as may be afterwards nothing to his purpoſe. It is likewiſe many times a great Cheat; as in ſuch Goods, in which the only Uſe depends on the Virtue of them; as in things Medicinal, Aromatical, and whatever belongs to Diſtilling, *&c.* tho' nothing above their Value be demanded: For then the Buyer is Cozen'd as to the whole, in paying a Price for what will not be ſerviceable; and is often a loſer both of his Labor and other Ingredients, which now anſwer not his deſign. But if by diſguiſing Goods, ſetting them off, or hiding their Faults, Tradeſmen not only make them paſs for better than they are, but likewiſe Sell them for the full Value, as if they were really Good,

as they appear, this cannot be clear'd from being an Injuſtice; and is a part of that over-reaching, againſt which the Apoſtle cautions all Chriſtians, and declares, that God will be the Avenger of it.

Wherefore, Thirdly, All Traders are to make it their General Rule, not to over-rate their Goods, or Sell them at an unreaſonable Price. This is eaſily to be underſtood in Goods, that are for Ordinary uſe, in which, tho' there be ſome difference as to Price in Shops, yet the difference is but inconſiderable, and to exceed this by taking Advantage of the Buyer's Ignorance, or of his Neceſſity or Curioſity, *&c.* and make him pay a Rate for Goods, which they know is above the Common Value, and ſuch as they could not demand of others of more Skill, without ſhame, and the loſs of their Reputation; this muſt be acknowledg'd as an Injuſtice, in letting Private Intereſt prevail upon them ſo far, at to ſtifle all the Principles of Sincerity and Fidelity, which ought to have the Direction of Chriſtians in all their Dealings with one another. Juſtice allows a Gain to Shopkeepers, but if they raiſe this by ſuch ways, which are not agreeable to Juſtice and Reaſon, they are Injurious to their Neighbors,

and cannot be acquitted from the guilt of Pick-pockets, tho' they are from the Infamy, by practiſing the ſame Art in a more Honorable Way.

This Caution is likewiſe to be their Rule, who not taking above the true Value of their Labor in Money, make an Advantage, by keeping ſome part of the Goods, which belong not to them; as in thoſe Trades, who make up Cloaths for others: For if by requiring more than is neceſſary for the Work they undertake; or contriving it ſo, as to make it up with leſs, than is put into their Hands, they are paid for their Labor, and reſerve the over-plus for themſelves, they certainly wrong thoſe, who employ them, in retaining what is theirs, without their Knowledge or Conſent; and in this act againſt Juſtice, which will not allow the detaining what belongs to others, but with the Will or Permiſſion of the Owners. All therefore of theſe Working Trades, are to be firſt Sincere in requiring no more, than what they judge neceſſary for the Work; and, as to whatever remains, they are to be Juſt in reſtoring it to the Right Owner; and are to expect their Gain in the Price of their Labor. If Cuſtom has given Authority to the contrary Practice,

ſtice, it cannot however make it Juſt, any more than Cuſtom does in Lying or Swearing; and therefore is not to be their Rule, who know the Account they are at length to give, is not to be examin'd by Corrupt Practices of Men, but by the Principles of the Goſpel.

This again is to be their Rule, who being employ'd by others, are not to put their Neighbors to unneceſſary Charges, in prolonging the Buſineſs they undertake, that they may be Gainers by ſuch delays. In this are concern'd Apothecaries, Surgeons, Phyſicians, Lawyers, *&c.* For if any of theſe make an Advantage, by delaying the Cure or the Cauſe of their Patients or Clients, or otherways make it more chargeable, than is neceſſary for effecting the Buſineſs put into their Hands, they certainly wrong their Neighbor, as to all the unneceſſary Expence; and as to every Penny they Gain by ſuch Contrivance, it muſt be ſet down as the Fruit of their Injuſtice: For nothing of this is anſwerable to that Sincerity and Fidelity, which are preſcrib'd by the Goſpel, and ought to have the direction of Chriſtians in all they do.

Many other Particulars might be here mention'd, but theſe may ſuffice to

to give Light to all the reſt. All know, what the Apoſtle means, in forbidding Chriſtians to over-reach their Neighbors, and they may be aſſur'd, they Offend againſt Juſtice, as often as they do it; and no Practice is ſufficient to juſtifie them, in doing contrary to their Duty. They may be ſo Induſtrious, as to Conceal it from Men, but this hides it not from the Eyes of God, who will demand an Account of all ſuch unwarrantable Proceedings, and to their Confuſion, let them ſee their loſs, in what, at preſent, they eſteem their Gain. 'Tis reaſonable, they ſhould make an Advantage by their Trade; but this Advantage ought to be regulated by Reaſon and Juſtice: But if their Greedy, Covetous Minds, immoderately bent on their own Private Intereſt, carry them beyond theſe bounds, they muſt be accountable for all ſuch Exceſs; which being an Offence againſt Juſtice, is not like many other Sins, which are Cancell'd by a Sincere Converſion of the Heart; but is attended with an Obligation of making Reſtitution to all thoſe, whom they have wrong'd by their Unjuſt and Fraudulent Dealing: And how ſhall this be done by thoſe, who having Traded for many Years, have ſcarce

ſail'd

fail'd of over-reaching any, whoſe Overſight or want of Skill gave them Opportunity of doing it? This is but a Melancholy Conſideration of a Duty, which can neither be diſpens'd with nor ſatisfied: And I could wiſh all thoſe, who are in the Circumſtances, would be watchful againſt ſuch a perplexing guilt, and not let Covetouſneſs, the Root of all Evil, bring them into ſuch a Snare, in which they cannot have a true Peace of Mind, and from which there is ſo much Difficulty of being diſengag'd.

Theſe Inſtructions given to the Seller, belong likewiſe to the Buyer, who cannot take any Advantage given him by the Indiſcretion, Ignorance or Neceſſity of him, that Sells, without the guilt of Fraud and Injuſtice; 'tis true the Seller ought to be careful in his own Concern; but if he be wanting, this gives no Right to the Buyer of taking his Goods under the true Value; ſince he is not ſuppos'd to give, but Sell them: And if the Injuſtice in this appears not, at leaſt 'tis evidently doing otherwiſe than they would be done by; ſince there is no Body willing an Advantage ſhould be taken either of their own or Servants Ignorance or Indiſcretion, becauſe they

they become real Sufferers by it; and they cannot be condemn'd of Raſh Judgment, in Cenſuring thoſe of not fair Dealing, and even of Knavery, who knowingly take any ſuch Advantage: For 'tis a Principle writ in the Hearts of all, That no Honeſt Man would do it.

Theſe then are Rules to be obſerv'd both by Buyer and Seller, and are ſuch, as are immediately drawn from the Doctrine expreſly deliver'd in the Goſpel. And would not one now expect, ſince all Chriſtians profeſs to follow the Goſpel, acknowledge their Salvation to depend on their obſervance of it, and Damnation to be entail'd on the wilful Tranſgreſſion of its Principles, that there ſhould be ſuch juſt Dealing amongſt all its Profeſſors, that a Child, with Money in his Hand, might have the full Value of what he deſires, and be out of danger of being deceiv'd? And is it ſo? Or, to our common Confuſion be it ſpoken, is it not ſo far from being ſo, that one wou'd gueſs by the general practice of Injuſtice amongſt Traders, that there are very few, who either believe the Goſpel, or that they have Souls to be Sav'd, by the obſervance of its Doctrine; whilſt Covetouſneſs, or the Immoderate Deſire

ſire of Gain raigns ſo univerſally amongſt them, that they are ever prepar'd to deceive, and ſeem in opening their Shop-windows, to ſet up a Trap for catching the unwary, where none can be ſecure, if they have not Cunning and Art to diſappoint their Deſigns? I wiſh this were not true; but what ſays the Practice, when there is no going into a Shop, but a Man muſt reſolve to give no Credit to the moſt Solemn Proteſtations, and Repeated Oaths of thoſe, that ſtand within the Counter? Does not this ſuppoſe, they have neither Sincerity, nor Truth, nor Honeſty in them, and that there is no ſurer way of being Cheated, than to believe what they ſay? This then is the Judgment made of them, taken from the Common Practice of the World: And 'tis that, which gives Light to a frightful Saying of S. *Chryſoſtom*, who in his Expoſition of the 21 Ch. of S. *Matthom.* 38. declares, that *no Chriſtian can be a Trader*: Not he that Condemns the Profeſſion as Unlawful; but conſidering the many Frauds and Injuſtices generally practis'd in it, judges them inconſiſtent with the Principles of Chriſtianity; and therefore that whoever undertakes to Trade, muſt either depart from theſe common Practices of Fraud,

or in Fact renounce the Goſpel he profeſſes.

This may be ſufficient to oblige all to conſider the Method they take in their Profeſſion; whether that, which is Authoriz'd by Common Practice, or which is Regulated by better Principles: This latter way will not be ſo gainful; but if it proves ſufficient for a Moderate Livelihood, there may be more Comfort in it, than in all the Advantages others make; which, if ever they are ſerious, muſt be attended with ſuch remorſe, as muſt render them uneaſie, and cannot fail of becoming their Rack, when, at the laſt Hour, they ſhall be Summon'd to give in their Accounts. Let therefore the Pious Trader reſolve not to live by Iniquity, nor to let his Bread be the Fruit of Injuſtice. Let him be ſtrict to his Principles, Buying and Selling, as is preſcrib'd, never concerning himſelf with Stolen Goods, *&c.* And if he Thrives not like his Neighbors, let his Comfort be, that he renounces ſo much Gain for the ſake of Juſtice; and with this, Hope that God will give a Bleſſing to his Endeavors, and be the Protector of thoſe, who make his Will the Rule of their Lives. Thus if he be Induſtrious in his Buſineſs, and yet watchful

watchful againſt all unprofitable Soli citude; if he obſerves Order in his Family, and is Faithful in his Duties to God and his Neighbor, he may be in a good way to Salvation, and find at length Admittance into that Place of Happineſs, whence thoſe will be excluded, who being Blinded with Ambition and Intereſt, have enrich'd themſelves by Fraud, and the Spoils of their Neighbor.

CHAP. XVIII.

Inſtructions for Good Chriſtians, and thoſe that deſire to be ſo.

HAving ſpoke to many States of Chriſtians, I cannot conclude without ſome Advice to thoſe, who are Good, and ſuch as are Solicitous to ſatisfie thoſe Common Duties enjoin'd by the Goſpel on all its Profeſſors.

Their Firſt Duty is of Faith, it being impoſſible without Faith to pleaſe God; that is, without the True Faith, even that which is Taught by Chriſt's Holy, Catholic, Apoſtolic, Church, which was eſtabliſh'd by Chriſt and his Apoſtles for teaching the whole World, and had the pro-

promis'd Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit for teaching the Truth to the End of the World. Now ſince there are many Diviſions of Chriſtians, all pretending to be the Church of Chriſt, and yet all cannot be it, every Chriſtian ought to bring this Point to the Teſt, and by the beſt of their Reaſon and other helps, Examin, whether they are Members of that One Church, which, amongſt them all, is True, even that mention'd in their Creed, which 'tis one Article of their Faith to believe. They are bound to ſeek Chriſt, and he being the Truth, except they find the Truth, they cannot find him. They ſeek the Beſt in all other things belonging to their Temporal Intereſt, the Beſt Air, the Beſt Houſe, the Beſt Diet, *&c.* on all occaſions they are weighing all Circumſtances, and comparing one Propoſal with another, that ſo they may know, how to chuſe the beſt. If they do not thus, they act not rationally, but are governing by Chance inſtead of Reaſon. Now if it be reaſonable to do ſo, where the Concern is only Temporal, muſt it not be much more reaſonable, in an Affair, where Eternity depends on the Choice? Or is it juſtifiable in a Chriſtian, to make uſe of all his Reaſon in leſſer Affairs, and leave the greateſt, even the One thing Neceſſary, to Chance?

Muſt

Muſt he lye ſtill here, as he is dropt, and not rather look about him with a jealous Eye, to ſee, whether he be in the Right? How can he pretend to Love God, or have a deſire of coming to the Poſſeſſion of him, if he be never Solicitous to enquire, whether he be in the Way, that leads to him? We do otherwiſe in all other things, which are the Object of our earneſt Deſires; we look, we enquire, we ſuſpect, we conſult, we uſe all Means for the gaining Aſſurance in a Point, wherein we are concern'd: If we do not ſo here, we either are not in earneſt, or elſe act not rationally.

A Second Principal Duty, is in uſing due Endeavors, for keeping the Commandments. Theſe are the expreſs Manifeſtation of God's Will, and the Care of keeping them, is the Condition requir'd for entering into Life Everlaſting: Therefore, whoever is good, or deſires to be ſo, muſt be Solicitous in ſatisfying this Point.

But Nature being Weak, and of it ſelf unable for this Performance; hence are theſe Chriſtians under a Neceſſity of ſeeking Help from above, and obtaining that Grace, which alone is capable of giving them ſtrength proportion'd to their Duties.

Prayer and the Sacraments being the Ordinary Means ordain'd by God for obtaining

taining his Grace, they are to be Faithful and Exact in the uſe of theſe Means; and a Neglect in them, is to be interpreted, a Voluntary depriving themſelves of the Help they want.

Nature being not only Weak; but alſo Corrupt, and violently bent to Evil, they are not to ſeek the ſtrength of Grace, but likewiſe endeavor to weaken all thoſe perverſe Inclinations and Paſſions in them, which draw from God, and incline them to Sin: And the Ordinary Means preſcrib'd for this being Self-denial, hence are they oblig'd to deny themſelves, and this not only in regard of Sin, but alſo, of what diſpoſes to Sin; that ſo they may be more remote from Danger, and by this Diſciplin, bring all their Paſſions into due ſubjection to Reaſon and Faith, and be leſs expos'd to their Rebelling.

And becauſe this Corruption, tho' it may be weakn'd, can never, in this Life, be rooted out, but either from the Devils Malice, or unavoidable Provocations, will be often breaking out; hence they are oblig'd to carry on this Method to the End of their Lives, and go on with an untir'd Patience, ſtill waiting on the Divine Grace for continued help, till God ſhall reward their Conſtancy with an unchangeable Crown.

The World being likewiſe Corrupt, and very

very powerful in its influence on the Judgments of Men, inſpiring them with Falſe Maxims, and recommending that as Innocent, which uſhers in Sin and Death; therefore are they to be very jealous of it and ſuſpect all its Arguments of Error, tho' they are back'd with the Strength of Cuſtom and Authority.

They are not to be Solicitous in ſeeking what the World admires as Great, or Pleaſing, or Modiſh: But looking on all its Wiſdom as Folly, remember, the Greatneſs and Satisfaction of a Chriſtian, is in a Life conform'd to the Principles of the Goſpel, that is, in a Life, that comes neareſt to the Spirit and Life of Chriſt. He is the Way, and all thoſe muſt chuſe him for their Way, who expect to come to the Participation of his Glory.

There being no Authority, that can juſtifie or warrant any Practice contrary or diſagreeable to the Doctrine and Example of Chriſt; tho' the whole World ſhould join in pleading for any Cuſtom contrary to the Humility, Moderation, Temperance, Meekneſs, Charity and Self-denying Spirit of the Goſpel, it is not to be regarded by theſe Chriſtians; but they are to eſteem it their Duty to depart from it, and then begin to think themſelves Happy, when they are reproach'd for leaving what the World approves.

And

And if their Portion be amongſt thoſe, who live in Plenty, and are to Maintain ſome kind of State ſuitable to their degree; this is all to be done with the Spirit of Humility: So that, as thoſe, who are Rich, are to be yet Poor in Spirit; ſo thoſe, who are oblig'd to any degree of worldly Greatneſs, are ſtill bound to perſevere amidſt this Pomp and Humble Spirit; that is, not to be in love with their State, nor think themſelves better on this account; but ever to retain a Senſe of their own Miſery and Nothing, to judge all their State to be Vanity, and be upon the watch daily to cut off Superfluities, ſo to bring themſelves by degrees into a Method of Life more becoming the Baniſhment, in which they are, and more agreeable to their unworthineſs, the Effect of their Sin.

As they are not to be Proud of their Retinue, Dignity or State; ſo neither of any Natural Ornaments of Body or Mind, or even of any degree of Virtue, upon which they may think themſelves better than others. Becauſe all theſe are the Gifts of God, and for them he ought to be Glorified: But as for themſelves, they are to conſider no more, than what they are of themſelves, or what they would be, did God withdraw what is his, and leave them to themſelves: And here

here appearing nothing but Sin, this ought to keep them ever Humble, be a Check to all Proud Thoughts, and never permit Vanity to Blow them up with the pleasing Opinion of their being better than their Neighbors. No; nor even to value themselves, for contemning the Vain, Empty Humor of others; for this is only Refining of Pride, or to be Proud of not being Proud.

If they thus know themselves and God, they are to let this Knowledge not only be the suppression of Pride, but likewise influence them in the whole Government of their Lives, especially as to all Uneasiness or Trouble, that befalls them. In all which Circumstances they are to remember, that whatever happens, is the Appointment or Permission of God, and that while it belongs to Him to Order all, it is their part to Submit to all. In this Submission is the Practice of all the Religion and Piety, which they profess, and therefore, it must be their indispensible and constant Duty to suppress all the Complaints, Murmuring, and Rebellious Inclinations of Nature, and force it to a peaceable Compliance with all the Appointments of God. If the Weakness of Nature, if Temptations, if Pains, Sickness, the difficult Circumstances of Life, Reproaches, Infamies, Injustice, Losses,

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Oppreſſion, Perſecution, *&c.* be Troubleſome, they are to conſider the Hand of God in all; here is to be the Exerciſe of their Humility, in ſtooping under his Hand, and of their Patience in bearing whatever weight is laid upon them. Whether it be for the Puniſhment of their Sins or for the Trial or Encreaſe of Virtue, or to give them a diſlike of this World, or to heighten in them the Deſires of a better, *&c.* they are not to be too Solicitous in enquiring, nor too Forward in determining, but leaving this to the unſearchable Councils of Providence, remember their only Buſineſs is to ſubmit, and that whatever be the Motives of God, they are certainly Juſt and Holy in themſelves, and cannot fail of being Beneficial in order to their Eternal Good, if they are not wanting in a juſt Humility and Patience under them.

In this manner are Good Chriſtians to proceed, with a true Faith, and entire Dependance on God, making the One thing Neceſſary the great Buſineſs of their Lives, ſtruggling with all the Difficulties they meet, with their Eyes ever on God, waiting his time for their Help and Deliverance. And thus, O God, I beſeech thee, may they find that Help, they deſire.

F I N I S.